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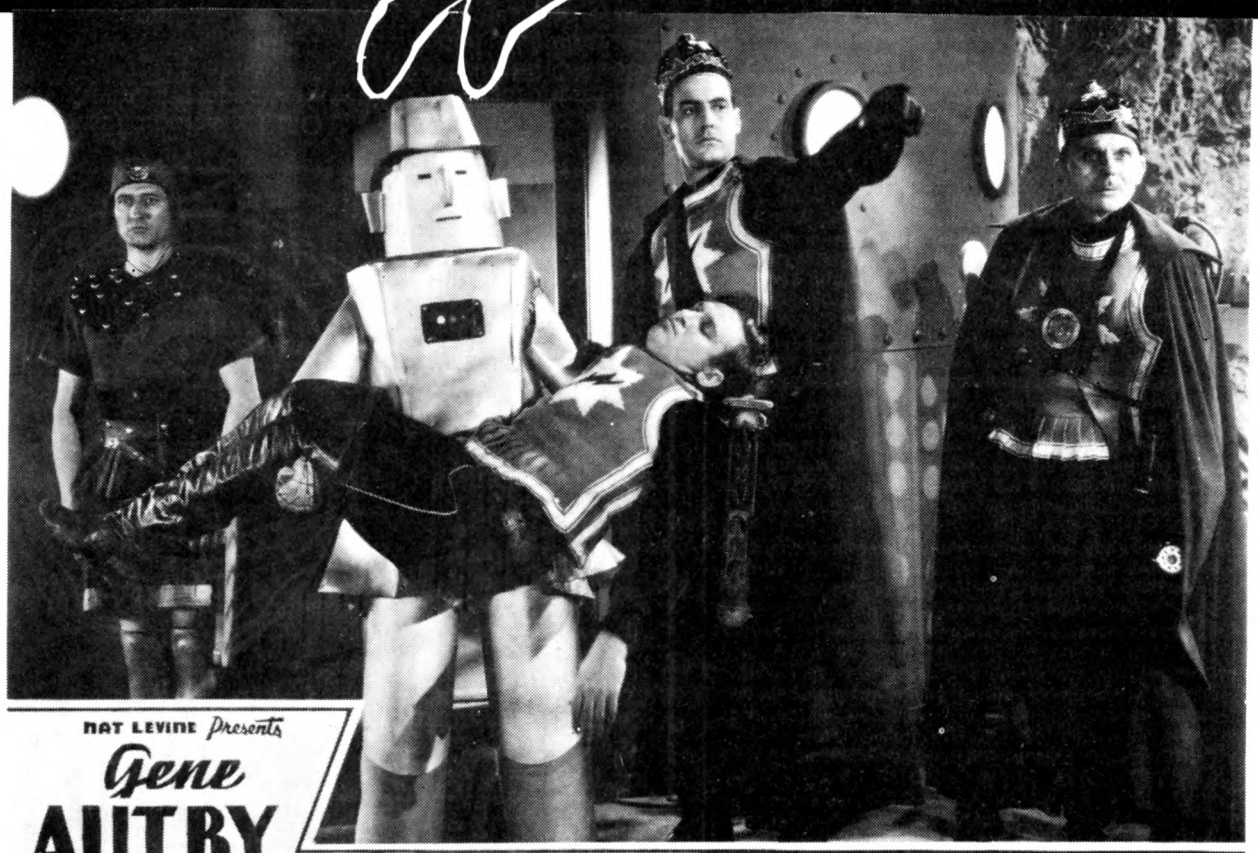
SPECIAL 32 PAGE ISSUE

SERIAL WORLD



SERIAL WORLD INTERVIEWS WALTER REED

A VISIT TO THE PHANTOM EMPIRE

SERIAL MODEL MAKER

SERIAL WORLD

VOL. 2, NO. 19

A Quarterly publication dedicated to the motion picture serial.

Norman H. Kietzer — Publisher
Jeff Walton — Editor
Staff Writers — Jim Stringham — Eric Hoffman — Greg Jackson Jr., Jim Hitt — Charles McCleary

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SERIAL WORLD (Publication Number USPS 324-390) is published quarterly by Norman H. Kietzer. Subscription rate is $6.00 for a one year (four issue) subscription.

On change pf address please give us six weeks advance notice to assure delivery. Postmaster: Please send form 3579 to Serial World, P.O. Box 3325, Mankato, Minnesota 56001.

Serial World editorial offices are at P. O. Box 64345, Los Angeles, California 90064; and circulation and publication offices are at 201 McConnell Street, Mankato, Minnesota 56001. Second Class Postate is paid at Mankato, Minnesota 56001 and at additional offices.

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SERIAL SHOWCASE

BY JEFF WALTON EDITOR SERIAL WORLD

Right off the bat I want to say we are dedicating this issue to a supporter of Serial World from the very beginning. Bobb Lynes designed our Rocketman cover in 1974 and in 1979 he has most generously done it again. Our new logo is great and Bobb, we cannot thank you enough.....

Hey, all you **TOM MIX** fans. Mario DeMarco, who draws some of our great serial superstars, is offering a new book on Tom. It's over 100 pages with over 170 rare stills - 9"x12" glossy pages only $6.50. For you **BUCK JONES** fans try his book also news only $5.75. Order both from M. DeMarco, 16 Harold Street, Worcester, Mass. 01604.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find an ad for the new book on Kay Aldridge. Thanks to Merrill T. McCord I received a copy and all of you fans of Kay should order a copy. It is one of the best little books of a serial star to come along in many a year. From a sensation model to a glamorous motion picture star you'll learn all about Kay and what she's doing today. I recently had the pleasure of meeting Kay at the Western Film Fair. She's a very cordial lady and a delight to listen and talk to. Photos of Kay appear in this issue as well.

This is our 19th issue. It's a good one I feel. The long awaited article on Phantom Empire is a humdinger. Greg Jackson Jr. brings us his exclusive interview with Walter Reed - Part One. We conclude Jim Stringham's great work and rare stills on Secret of Treasure Island, bring you into the world of serial model makers and take a long lost look at **PEARL WHITE** thanks to Manny Weltman. There is much more so read on.

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DEATH TAKES "BURN 'EM UP BARNES" JACK MULHALL

Silent movie star Jack Mulhall, who made and lost $1 million in a series of comebacks in talkies, radio, stage and television, has died at the age of 91.

Mulhall, who came to Hollywood in 1914 with Mary Pickford and joined her in D.W. Griffith's old Biograph Co., died June 1 of congestive heart failure at the Motion Picture Country Home and Hospital in Woodland Hills.

Rosary will be recited tonight at Pierce Bros. mortuary chapel in Hollywood. A funeral mass will be said Friday morning in Blessed Sacrament Church.

Mulhall, who claimed to be the first film actor to make a salary in three figures - $100 for one week's work in 1917 - was a living example of his belief that film stars "just don't retire."

Mulhall was paired with such stars as Colleen Moore, Corinne Griffith, Constance and Norma Talmadge, Billie Dove, when he was among the highest paid actors of that era.

Mulhall was born Oct. 7, 1887 in Wappinger Falls, N.Y. As a teenager, he made his way to New York City, worked in an iron foundry, then got a job as a sideshow barker at a Passaic, N.J. amusement park.

He achieved his ambition to become a professional dancer and appeared in the Ziegfeld Follies on Broadway and began his Hollywood movie career in 1914.

After losing his fortune, he maintained a cheerful philosophy and years later told an interviewer, "I guess an actor just can't be a good businessman. Nowadays the stars engage business advisors and let them handle their money, allowing them a little for spending and investing the rest in sound propositions, so that today's stars won't be working tomorrow out of necessity - but they'll be working just the same, no doubt, just to keep from being bored."

Among his movie credits were "Sirens of the Sea," "Friendly Enemies," "Just Another Blonde," and "Hollywood Boulevard."

RONALD VIVIAN PRESENTS.....

THE PHANTOM EMPIRE
A Mascot Serial in 12 Chapters
Copyright February 23, 1935
Featuring the Scientific City of Murania
Total Running Time: 242:30
Feature version titles: "Radio Ranch" and "Men with Steel Faces" copyright May 2, 1940

"The Phantom Empire" was one of Mascot Studios' two best-known serials, the other being "The Miracle Rider." This incredible mixture of western action, science fantasy, country music, and intellectual criminality was certainly one of a kind. Although 1935 studio press releases held that head writer Wallace McDonald came up with the basic plot while under gas in his dentist's chair, the serial actually represented a shrewd effort by studio boss Nat Levine to exploit the then-current interest in science fictin while filming on a low "wester" budget. Levine was gambling not only that this hybrid effort would grab the serialgoer's fancy, but that his recently signed "star," Gene Autry, along with his band and sidekick, "Smiley" Burnette, would prove equally attractive. He was right on both counts. The serial was a big moneymaker for Mascot, despite its quite complicated plot and rampart grade-school level of acting. Somehow its very crudeness gives "The Phantom Empire" a certain charm lacking in many of the slicker, expensive "A" productions.

Gene Autry was a popular country and western radio singer in the early 30's, but aspired to a movie career. After convincing Levine to give him a contract, Gene and his band were first placed in Mascot's only western feature, "In Old Santa Fe," as background musicians. Besides star Ken Maynard, the cast included "Empire" costars Smiley Burnette, Betsy King Ross, and Wheeler Oakman, plus a then-unknown George "Gabby" Hayes. Coincidentally, Hayes would reappear with Gene and Smiley five years later in Republic's "In Old Monterey."

CAST

Gene Autry	Gene Autry
Frankie Baxter	Frankie Darro
Betsy Baxter	Betsy King Ross
Queen Tika	Dorothy Christie
Lord Argo	Wheeler Oakman
Mal	Charles K. French
Rab	Warner Richmond
Professor Beetson	Frank Glendon
Oscar	Lester "Smiley" Burnette
Pete	William Moore
Dr. Cooper	Edward Peil Sr.
Saunders	Jack Carlyle
A Thunder Rider	Wally Wales
with	Jay Wilsey
	Fred Burns
	Stanley Blystone
	Richard Talmadge
	Frank Ellis
	Bob Burns
	Bob Card
	Bruce Mitchell
	Wally West
	George Magrill
And Champion as himself	

CREDITS

Directed by	Otto Brower and B. Reeves Eason
Supervised by	Armand Schaefer
Supervising Editor	Wyndham Gittens
Original Story by	Wallace McDonald
	Gerald Geraghty
	H. Freedman
Continuity by	John Rathmell-Armand Schaefer
Photographed by	Ernest Miller - William Nobles
Film Editor	Earl Turner
Sound Engineer	Terry Kellum
Musical Director	Lee Zahler
Special Effects by	Howard & Theo. Lydecker
Produced by	Nat Levine
Synopsis by	Ronald Vivian

Gene and Smiley next appeared as nonsinging support in "Mystery Mountain," Ken Maynard's only serial. "Empire" was Gene's third film, his first starring role, his last film for Mascot, and his last serial, although Smiley would soon appear in "Undersea Kingdom" and the first "Dick Tracy" sans Gene. Doubtless Levine would have used Gene in future serials had not Mascot been absorbed into Republic in mid-1935. However, the type of vehicles he was placed in at Republic undoubtedly did much more to develop him as both actor and star.

Behind the Scenes: special effects wizards Howard and Theodore Lydecker devised a realistic, clever, yet remarkably inexpensive method of filming the bizarre scenes of Murania's destruction. Large glossy stills of the desired scenes were made up, mounted, and heated from the rear. The emulsion softened and the camera caught each scene turning to liquid and running down the paper backing. The Lydeckers would use this same inspiration again over at Republic in "Adventures of Captain Marvel," "King of the Rocket Men," and "Radar Men from the Moon."

Mindful of copyright infringement (and doubtless watching the budget closely!), Nat Levine made certain that Gene sang only his own compositions during the serial...stock footage of the aerial torpedo launcher in chapter two was utilized in the conclusion to chapter one of "Undersea Kingdom" to destroy a mountain...Betsy King Ross, billed as "World's Champion Trick Rider" and Frankie Darro, an experienced horseman, did all of their own stunt riding in the chapterplay...with this film, Gene Autry became the first cowboy actor to use his real name for the role...although Gene is shot off his horse in both chapters one and two, neither he nor Champion shows any sign of a bullet wound afterwards...several of the rather fragile-looking tin-hatted Muranian robots returned for one final appearance in Columbia's "Captain Video."

The long shots of Queen Tika's throne room were filmed in a nearly finished observatory discovered by a Mascot location scout, thus giving audiences a beautiful view of the Scientific City through its striking glass-paneled wall and ceiling. Scenes such as these and the abundant use of the painstaking Lydecker miniatures gave the impression of a larger shooting budget than was actually allotted...as was the custom with Mascot, background music was present only over the credit, title, and recap cards. The "Continued Next Week" card was jarringly silent, save for background noises (if any) which were carried over from the preceding scene. The style of this last card, plain white lettering on a solid black background was copied exactly by Republic in their earliest chapterplays, this time accompanied by a rousing musical score.

The close of chapter one is worthy of special mention as it is either a coincidence or a very subtle inside joke. To hide from the Thunder Riders, Gene, Frankie, and Betsy, using a lariat, suspend themselves over the side of a steep precipice and, of course, eventually fall. A true "cliffhanger" ending if ever there was one!

Chapter One: The Singing Cowboy

Our story opens with some wranglers cheering on a bronc rider at Radio Ranch, which caters to guests. As the frightened dudes cringe, a gang of riders fires at a fleeing stagecoach. One of the dudes yells, "It's Autry's men making another raid!" The stage is stopped a short distance from the ranchhouse and the mustachioed leader covers the driver. "You know what we're after," he barks, "Throw it out and be quick about it!" Someone inside the stage hands out some odd loot: a bass fiddle, a couple of violins, and other instruments. Autry and the "gang" then show what gives Radio Ranch its name. Peeling off his false mustache, Gene and his Radio Riders step up before the microphone to start their daily remote broadcast by singing "Uncle Noah's Ark."

After the song, Frankie and Betsy Baxter, teenage children of Tom Baxter who is Gene's partner in the ranch, step up to the mike. They urge all boys and girls listening to join the National Thunder Riders Club, of which Frankie is the president and Betsy the vice-president. Frankie's tale of how they came to form the club is a strange one. Out riding one day on the desert, Frankie and Betsy heard a distant sound like thunder and hid behind some rocks. Soon dozens of men wearing flowing capes and strange helmets rode by, the sound being caused by their horses' hooves. Frightened, the youngsters were chased after being discovered. In the lead, Betsy's horse stumbled, but she was picked up by Frankie who then swung them into the braches of a tall tree, unseen by the pursuit. Climbing the tree, they managed to jump over to the top of a small rise and escape before the riders spotted them. Dubbing the pursuers "The Thunder Riders" and seeing them at a distance occasionally after that inspired their club, the local members even wearing costumes similar to those of the adult riders.

After giving a plug for listeners to start local clubs, Gene narrates a serialized story of homesteaders being besieged by outlaws. He closes the show with a cliffhanger: "Will the Thunder Riders get there in time? And that, folks, you will learn when you tune in tomorrow!"

Tom tells Gene that guest business is booming thanks to his show. "Why, our guests are coming on trains and horses and in automobiles. And now, they're arriving by airplane." The plane in question, just now landing on the ranch, is occupied by the villainous Professor Beetson, his associates Saunders and Dr. Cooper, Sharp the pilot, and several heavies. Pretending to be guests, Beetson and party actually have information that the lost city of Mu is located beneath Radio Ranch and intend to enter the city to strip it of both its valuable radium deposits and its scientific secrets.

That evening, Betsy enters Frankie's secret laboratory in the loft of the barn. Frankie has "borrowed" a cyclometer tube from the radio engineer to complete his radio direction finder,

meant to indicate the source of some strange signals he's been picking up lately on his receiver. Suddenly the odd, Morse code-like signals are heard on the open radio. "Frankie, look! The direction finder's standing on its head!" The youngsters mention the signals to Gene and the trio later discusses the phenomenon with Beetson. "The signals," says Frankie, "sounded like human signals." "Static, just static," replies Beetson. "However, I'll give the matter some thought and, uh, look into it further a little later." Gene has a possible clue, a doll dressed as a Thunder Rider which was found at the head of Thunder Valley, the name commonly given to the area from which the riders appear. He offers to lead the scientists there and they quickly accept. Privately, Beetson known only Gene stands between him and the radium. "Without him, there would be nothing here to interest anyone and the place would soon become deserted...your job is to see that he doesn't come back."

Early next morning, Gene guides Cooper and Saunders to Thunder Valley. On the way, Gene just misses being crushed by a huge rock rolled over a cliff by one of Beetson's henchmen. As Champion bolts, Gene is then ambushed by Sharp. Meanwhile, Cooper and Saunders spot and trail a single Thunder Rider returning to the valley on foot, but are seen. When Cooper is slightly wounded by the rider's knife-throwing gun, Saunders puts a shot through the man's air helmet. Beetson, not far behind, is then hailed by Saunders. A search for the rider turns up only the helmet. Beetson correctly surmises that the rider's friends helped him to escape.

At that moment, the wounded rider is being helped by two others through a camouflaged door into a mountainside in Thuder Valley, referred to as the Garden of Life by these people. Passing the riders' stables, living quarters, and communications section, the three take an express elevator down thousands of feet to the city of Mu, or Murania as it is now known, a futuristic scientific city boasting healing and destroying radiation, remote cameraless television, and robots to do the manual labor, but whose people dress much as the ancient Egyptians. As the rider is now reviving in the "normal" air of the city, the others take him at once to the throne room of the city's ruler, Queen Tika, which is on the 33rd level. Furious at learning that surface men have invaed the Garden of Life (legally Gene's property!), the queen is noetheless pleased that they escaped without being seen and orders the wounded man taken to the radium revival chamber, which can restore even certain of the dead to vigorous health. Tika goes to the communications room and orders the officer in charge to display the Garden on a huge TV screen. Finding Beetson and Saunders discussing the removal of both Gene and his partner and learning their motives, the queen has new orders for her imperial guard (The Thunder Riders): "Proceed at once to the Garden of Life and destroy the entrance so that no surface man may ever find it again." Meantime, Gene has recovered from his fall, but Champion is gone, so he lights a signal fire.

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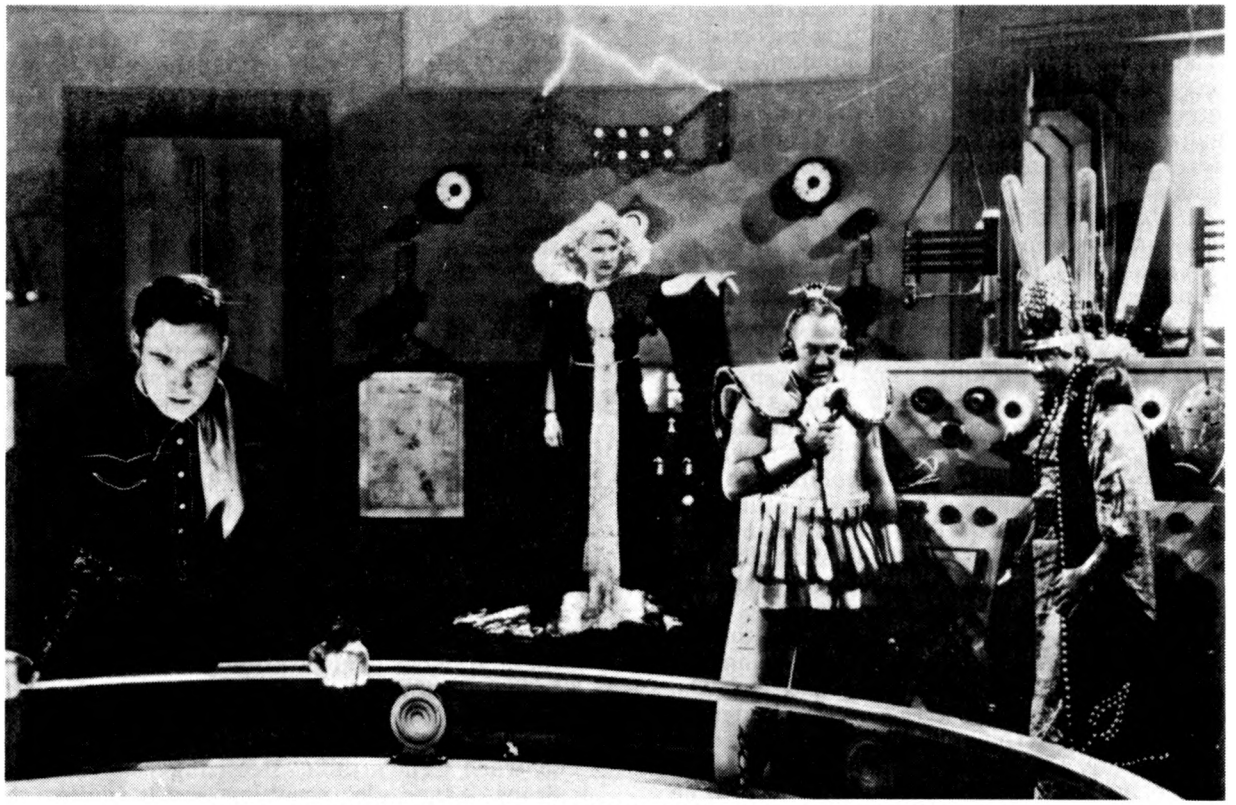
The Junior Thunder Riders are meeting trying to decide on a club motto when the sound of thunder is heard and they see Champion returning to the ranch at top speed. "Something must have happened to him!" shouts Frankie. "To the rescue!" And he has his motto. The Junior Riders split up, Frankie and Betsy heading for Thunder Valley where they spot Gene's smoke. Picking him up, they head back to the ranch at full speed, for if Gene misses his two o'clock broadcast, he stands to lose his contract.

Lord Argo, chancellor of Murania, has had an inspiration. He suggests capturing Gene, rather than destroying the secret entrance. Like Beetson, he knows that without the broadcasts Radio Ranch would eventually be deserted and Murania's existence would remain a secret. Tika agrees. "Get the captain of the Thunder Riders on the wireless telephone (actually a two-way TV set, or visiphone)...Gene Autry approaches Thunder Valley. Capture him! (author's note: it is at this point that Tika more or less discontinues using the terms "Royal Guard" and "Garden of Life," substituting instead the surface appellations "Thunder Riders" and "Thunder Valley")." Shortly, the three hear the riders gaining on them. Turning off, they scatter the horses, tie a rope to a nearby tree, and conceal themselves by dangling over the edge of a steep cliff. The guard follows their trail, riding right over the rope which soon begins to fray under the relentless pounding of hooves. Suddenly the strands part, plunging Gene, Frankie, and Betsy into the abyss!

Chapter Two: The Thunder Riders

Rolling down the steep slope, Gene manages to grab a small tree, then catches the youngsters as they slide by. Just then, the Junior Riders appear and toss them a rope. Up ahead, the guard has found their horses and realizes that the bird has flown the trap. The captain radios Tika for instructions and is ordered to return to the city to protect its secrets. The Junior Riders rush Gene to the ranch by another route, getting him to the mike just in time to sing "I Call on Oscar, I Call on Pete," a tribute to Gene's two comedic sidekicks. Prof. Beetson, astonished to see him, remarks, "Sharp must have missed." He is now more determined than ever to kill Gene so as to have a free hand at those radium deposits.

Meanwhile, Nord, captain of the Thunder Guard, stands before his ruler who is incensed at his failure to capture Gene, whom she considers a menace. His punishment is not long in coming: "Ten lashes of the scrabula from the 'gentle' Argo should teach my captain obedience." Tika then goes to the big TV screen and has her communications officer tune in Radio Ranch. Gene is by now narrating today's serial story (being enacted both for the camera and for the microphone). A frontier couple (Pete and Oscar, who plays a woman) are aboard a stage being chased by outlaws. The stage turns over and, as the Junior Riders speed to the rescue, Gene in fun joins the "outlaws" who are firing blanks at Pete, Oscar, and Tom Baxter, who suddenly collapses. After the sign-off, Frankie and Betsy bend over Baxter. "Turn over, daddy," says Betsy. "I'm s'pposed to bandage you." To their horror, the children discover that their father is really dead.



GENE - DOROTHY CHRISTIE - WARNER RAYMOND - GUY BATES POST

Gene checks all of the guns used and is amazed to find live ammunition in his own rifle, unaware that he has been set up by Beetson, who had had the sheels switched. Taking charge, Beetson phones for the sheriff and has Gene confine to his room. Believing in Gene's innocence, Frankie and Betsy slip in. Gene tells them that he has decided to escape, as he cannot clear himself behind bars. Vaulting from his ground floor window over guard Oscar's head, Gene escapes on Champion accompanied by a volley of blank shots from Oscar's rifle. The sheriff with his posse arrives a moment later and Beetson offers him the use of his plane to locate the fugitive. The sheriff gratefully accepts and takes along a crate of tear gas bombs he just happens to be carrying in his car.

Frankie and Betsy overhear the plan and quickly sneak aboard the plane to sabotage it, but are frustrated by the immediate arrival of Sharp and the sheriff which forces them to hide in the cargo compartment. Tika, who has been watching Gene since he returned to the ranch and knows he is innocent, sees her chance to kidnap him and orders out the Thunder Guard. The posse closes in on Gene and a deputy grazes the quarry with a rifle shot, knocking him off Champion. The Thunder Guard suddenly appears and makes off with Gene, losing the posse but being picked up by the sheriff who has Sharp swoop down so he can lob a few gas bombs. Of course, they have no effect due to the riders' self-contained oxygen supply. Tika witnesses the attack on her TV screen and orders her surface-located armament chamber to launch on aerial torpedo against the plane. The sheriff wounds a rider with his .44 and at that point Gene tumbles from his captor's horse. Just then, the aerial toropedo scores a direct hit on the plane!

Chapter Three: The Lightning Chamber

Frankie and Betsy find parachutes and bail out just as the stricken plane starts to fall. Frankie lands safely and, joined by Gene, rescues Betsy whose chute became caught in a tree. Fortunately, Gene had been out cold during the tear gas attack and so was not blinded. The three find the plane with surprisingly little damage. Sharp and the sheriff are unconscious on the ground, having been thrown out in the crash, and are found to be temporarily blinded due to tear gas (author's note: this is not explained but it may be assumed that some of the grenades on the plane shatter in the crash). Gene decides to change clothes with Sharp so that he can investigate incognito. The real Sharp is tied up and concealed. A search party led by Oscar and Pete finds the sheriff and "Sharp" with their eyes bandaged and takes them and the youngsters back to the ranch. Oscar and Pete, however, stay behind to check out the damage and start fooling around with the gas bombs. Of course, one is soon broken, sending the pair on a crying jag.

Meanwhile, Captain Nord rounds up the Thunder Guard and returns to Murania in disgrace, having failed to capture Gene twice. "There can be no third chance," Argo reminds Tika, who instructs Argo to arrest Nord himself. In the throne room, Tika reviews Nord's failures and sentences the hapless officer to immediate death in the lightning chamber. Argo, also the city's executioner, leads Nord into the chamber and then reveals that he is the leader of a secret movement against the tyrannical queen which is backed by all of the previous condemned men who supposedly had been executed by Argo. The chancellor has them concealed in a rebel headquarters on a lower level, one entrance to

which is a trap door in the floor of the death chamber itself, all of them awaiting the order to strike. Nord of course agrees to joint the cause.

Argo briefs him, then leaves the chamber. Tika herself gives the order to execute, but does not realize that Argo has dropped Nord through the secret trap door an instant before turning on the deadly voltage, sufficient to have cremated him.

In Sharp's room at the ranch, Frankie and Betsy are discussing their suspicions of Beetson with a facially bandaged Gene when Beetson and Saunders are heard approaching, forcing the youngsters to hide in the closet. The men discuss a few things with "Sharp,," then leave to dispose of the rifle that actually killed Tom Baxter. Frankie and Betsy slip out while "Sharp" decoys the men back with a cry of pain. The children find the rifle in Beetson's room and escape with it down the drainpipe. Beetson returns in a moment to find the rifle missing, but sees the sheriff putting it in his car as Frankie is telling the lawman of its importance. Just then, the REAL sharp, having freed himself, comes running up to the sheriff, shouting of his kidnaping. The gang goes after Gene, who leaps from the second story right into the open car, punches a heavy who is reaching for the rifle, and drives off at top speed. Oscar, who has been working beneath the car, has bad news for him. "Hey, Gene! You haven't got any brakes! Hey, Gene!" Gene is, of course, out of sight being chased by the gang. Up ahead, he races down a steep grade, loses control, and the car goes off the road and over the edge of a cliff!

Chapter Four: Phantom Broadcast

Frankie and Betsy quickly organize the Junior Riders. Taking a short cut, they catch up to Gene and pull him from the car just before he crash. Unfortunately, there is not ime to save the all-important rifle, which is destroyed. When the sheriff arrives on the scene, he concludes that Gene perished in the accident. Frankie rigs a remote control mike so that Gene can do his part of the next broadcast without revealing himself, then secures the aid and silence of his Junior Riders concerning Gene.

Meanwhile, Mal, seneschal of the realm, is telling Tika that he cannot locate Lord Argo, who at this moment is in the armament tower having an aerial torpedo prepared to destroy Radio Ranch once and for all. Tika has her communications officer conduct a televised search for Argo, also utilizing the Thunder Guard. Frankie is in his lab just then checking the remote hookup when he hears the strange interference again and sees the direction finder pointing straight down. Meantime, Oscar and Pete drive a hay wagon to the barn, not realizing that Gene is hidden inside the cargo. The radio engineer decides to begin the broadcast without Gene, starting with a selection by the Cowboy Quartette. Oscar rides up with some baled hay that Pete is lifting by winch and gains the barn loft only with much difficulty. Starting to pitch the hay, Oscar strikes Gene with the fork and is so surprised at the cry of pain from the stack that he topples from the loft back into the wagon.

Tika has by this time located Argo in the armament tower. His weapon ready, Argo asks permission to destroy the ranch. Tika refuses and orders Argo to report to her at once. Gene gets to Frankie's lab and cuts into the broadcast just before Eddie, the engineer, is able to tell the audience of Gene's absence. The band recovers quickly from the shock and accompanies Gene in his song, "Uncle Henry." Beetson and his gang, back from a day of searching for clues to the location of the radium deposits, are astounded to hear Gene's voice emanating from Eddie's speaker. Beetson immediately realizes that Gene must be nearby and mounts a quiet but thorough search.

One heavy finds the hookup wire and traces it to the barn where Beetson finds the door secured and attempts to force it. Gene hears the noise and, quickly wrapping up the broadcast, has everybody grab equipment and supplies they are likely to need for future broadcasts and pile down the collapsible ladder to the ground floor. Frankie has a sack of gunpowder with him, but doesn't notice that the torn bag is leaving a trail (author's note: though essential to the cliffhanger, the presence of gunpowder in Frankie's lab is totally illogical as his research area is electronics and broadcasting, rather than munitions or explosives). Just before Beetson and his gang burst into the barn, the three have closed behind them a concealed door leading to a handy escape tunnel cut through an adjacent hill. As the gang frantically searches the empty barn, Cooper absently picks up a stripped live wire while trying to trace Gene's mike. Realizing what it is, he drops it and the resulting spark ignites the powder trail. Gene has just discovered that the escape door at the far end of the tunnel is locked as Frankie hears an ominous hissing sound. The three turn to watch, horrified, as the burning trail speeds towards them. Suddenly there is a terrific explosion!

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Chapter Five: Beneath the Earth

The Junior Riders see the gang break into the barn and one of them suddenly recalls that the escape door is locked. As they hurriedly unlock the door from the outside, Frankie drops the gunpowder and the trio scrambles to safety just before the blast which immediately brings Beetson and company out of the barn. The two factions see each other and Gene's group mounts up and runs, closely pursued by the gang. Pulling ahead, Gene thinks quickly, knowing Beetson means to kill him as a fugitive in flight. Dismouting in the midst of a tame horse herd and quickly removing his saddle, he leaves Champion and dives for cover. The Junior Riders also conceal themselves. The gang gives up the chase after a fruitless search.

Later, at an emergency meeting of the Junior Riders, Oscar and Pete agree to haul remote broadcasting equipment out to Gene in hiding at the Riders' canyon clubhouse so that he can continue to broadcast. Meanwhile, Tika and Argo, using the big TV screen, spy on Gene as he enters the clubhouse. Tika has the location patched into the communication screen of Lieutenant Pall, new leader of the Thunder Riders, with orders to capture Gene at all costs.

Shortly Frankie and Betsy enter the clubhouse and assure Gene that Pete and Oscar are close behind with the equipment. All rush to the window upon hearing the tell-tale sound of thunder and watch in dismay as the guard reins up at the shack. Gene conceals Frankie and Betsy in the storeroom as Lt. Pall tries to break in the locked front door. Upon hearing Oscar and Pete's wagon in the distance, he orders the rest of the guard to take care of the intruders while he burns his way in with his ray rifle.

When Gene's friends spot the riders bearing down on them, they turn the wagon around and whip up the team, speeding past Beetson and the gang who were attracted by the thunder. One look is enough for the gang, who hightails it after Oscar and Pete. Inside the shack, Pall checks the storeroom, but the youngsters have hidden well. When he spots Gene, there is a terrific fistfight which ends when Gene knocks off the man's helmet, rendering him unconscious. The guard returns, having lost the surface men. To prevent a search of the clubhouse, Gene quickly changes clothes with pall, binds him, hides everybody in the storeroom, and staggers outside as Pall, claiming that Gene escaped. For his failure, "Pall" is arrested and taken back for punishment as Frankie and Betsy watch from behind a window. When they check on the real Pall, however, they are surprised to find him gone, even without his oxygen helmet (author's note: Pall never reappears. His subsequent whereabouts are never explained nor even inquired into and it can only be assumed that he perished while trying to make his way back to Murania).

On the way back, Gene makes an abortive escape attempt. Knowing what he faces, the other guardsmen do not blame him for that nor for keeping his helmet on as he enters the throne room. Tika, however, is furious as usual. "You dare to wear your oxygen helmet in the presence of your queen? Remove it at once!" As Gene reluctantly complies, her rage turns to pleased astonishment. "Gene Autry! A surface man in Murania!" When asked his opinion of the kingdom, Gene is curt and acidulous. "I think the dampness and dead air of your city is better suited to rats and moles than to men." Tika smiles cruelly. "You have shown that you are a brave man. Let us see if you are also a wise one."

Gene is taken to the communications room and is shown not only the superscientific achievements of Murania, but also Frankie and Betsy returning safely to Radio Ranch. "And now," pronounces Tika. "Your knowledge of Murania must die with you!" Gene is dragged into the lightning chamber as the queen orders Argo, "Build up 200,000 volts for the chamber of death!" When the door is locked, Argo throws the switch. Gene staggers momentarily between the giant electrical arcs, then falls, an apparent victim of the man-made lightning!

Chapter Six: Disaster from the Skies

Argo surreptitiously opens the trap door to rebel headquarters through which Gene falls before he can be harmed by the lightning. Finding himself in a corridor, he hears voices and through a small window sees Rab, the kingdom's chief surgeon and a co-conspirator, talking to Nord and the rebels in the main room of Argo's headquarters. Rab is demonstrating two weapons recently developed by rebel scientists, the rifle-shaped Z-ray lithium blinding gun and the melting ray, which projects a visible beam and resembles a cement mixer on legs. Rab turns on the melting device for a short demonstration but Gene is spotted and quickly captured when the ray sweeps across his face. Rab correctly deduces that Gene was saved from death by Argo for purposes of experimentation.

Gene breaks loose and grabs the Z-ray gun, but is tripped and accidentally blinds a rebel in falling. He manages to escape in the confusion with the gun as Rab assures the panic-stricken victim that the condition is only temporary. Argo enters and Rab informs him of the escape, mentioning that the charge in Gene's gun is nearly exhausted. Argo leaves and informs the palace guards that Gene has "somehow" escaped from the death chamber. Entering an alcove to evade the dragnet, Gene finds an open window leading into the communications room. Mal and Tika are watching all of Gene's guests leaving Radio Ranch, telling Beeston that the exodus is due to the murder charge against Gene. Mal and Tika are exultant, knowing they can easily handle the small gang of scientists once the others are gone.

When the two leave the room, Gene enters and forces the communications officer to tune in the ranch once more. He sees the Junior Riders holding a meeting to plan their next move, but without Frankie and Betsy, who are using the direction finder in an effort to locate Murania where they know Gene is. The communications officer jumps Gene in a struggle for the now-empty gun and is knocked cold. Gene manages to override the system's voice scrambler and contact Frankie on his lab radio, giving him directions to the hidden door in Thunder Valley but just after has to retreat through the window when he hears Argo, Tika, and some guards approaching.

By visiphone Tika orders Suma, the weapons officer, to prepare a radium bomb to wipe out Pete and the Junior Riders who have been seen galloping to Thunder Valley on the big TV. Oscar is having trouble getting started as his mule will move only upon hearing one particular tune whistled. Oscar, of course, has forgotten the tune. Dismounting to think better, he finally recalls it, but forgets to remount first and ends up chasing the mule down the road at top speed.

Meanwhile a group of soldiers are checking out the Muranian guard robots, setting them for duty by pressing buttons on their bodies. If a robot's photoelectric light beam is broken, the intruder will be cut in half by the heavy sword each guard carries. As Suma launches the flying bomb, guards spot Gene and chase him into the express elevator, fortunately open. One of the men gets in before Gene can shut the door and, after a fierce struggle, loses consciousness when the elevator reaches the surface. Gene, having heard Tika's order, gains access to the armament room and knocks out Suma in a vicious fight. Just as Gene has blindly succeeded in changing the bomb's course by 180 degrees, he is knocked out from behind by the recovered Suma, who is then forced to flee as he sees the missile returning. The weapon flies in through the launching port and strikes the floor near Gene, destroying the chamber in the resultant explosion!

Chapter Seven: From Death to Life

For once, the luck of a hero has deserted Gene and the guards find him, on the brink of death, buried in the rubble. Tika, notified by visiphone, orders Gene taken immediately to the radium revival chamber. Tika strongly suspects that Argo was responsible for Gene's miraculous escape from the sealed lightning chamber and needs Gene's testimony to prove it. Now without heavy weapons, she dispatches th Thuder Riders to dispose of the group of teenagers now approaching Thunder Valley.

Two guards take Gene down to the city and a robot carries him into the revival chamber. Argo, notified that Gene is to be revived, realizes that matters are coming to a head and prepares to start his revolt at a moment's notice despite Dr. Rab's promise to make certain that Gene never talks. If he did, Argo knows the resulting investigation would send him to his own death chamber and, wishing to take no chances, sends two rebels with an electric knife to sever the main power cables of the entire city.

Rob hastens to the chamber of life, pronounces Gene dead, and is ordered by Tika to revive him, a result the surgeon claims is uncertain of accomplishment. Powerless to disobey, however, Rab puts Gene through the revival process and is successful, although Gene is incoherent and disorganized due to the shock. Rab offers to "restore" Gene's mind with a brain operation and his unsuspecting sovereign decides to take the risk. Just then, Argo enters and, confronted by Tika's suspicions concerning his loyalty, calmly denies them, saying that he wants the real traitor caught just as much as she. Gene begins to regain his power of speech and is about to tell of his escape when the lights go out. He escapes in the confusion before the emergency power cuts in.

The enraged queen orders a dragnet for the fugitive, then by radio calls in the Thunder Guard to aid in the search, luckily before they have found the Junior Riders; then directs a robot team to locate and repair the power break. Argo and his men capture Gene, but must cut off the hinges of the electric door to get into rebel headquarters. In the process, Gene starts a fight and escapes, now armed with a short sword. While Tika, suspecting sabotage to come, sweeps the city with her TV, Frankie and Betsy search apart from the others for the hidden entrance to Murania. Instead, they find the horses of Beeston's gang tethered near a rope ladder reaching into a deep ravine at the bottom of which is the entrance to an abandoned mine. Hiding their mounts and sneaking into the mine, they overhear the gang discussing the radium deposits located by their detector at the 3000 foot level. The youngsters must take cover as the gang suddenly leaves to procure dynamite, pulling the rope ladder after them and trapping the children.

With power restored, Tika remembers to order a watch put on the elevator which is Gene's only means of escape to the surface. The fugitive, however, reaches the elevator just before his pursuers and manages to reach the surface only to be confronted by the Thunder Guard which has been alerted by Tika. Shutting the elevator in their faces, he retreats to a lower level which he finds houses the great machines which sustain the life of the city. Ascending a circular staircase which he hopes will lead him to the surface, Gene is surprised by the Thunder Guard at the next level. He fights a sword duel with them, beats

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them back, and breaks away but is followed by one guard who engages him and manages to shove Gene over the railing of the catwalk, apparently to his doom.

Chapter Eight: Jaws of Jeopardy

In falling, Gene grabs a pipe, then drops safely to the floor and gains the elevator, but one guard manages to get in before the door closes. In the ensuing fight, the brakes are accidentally released and the car plummets nearly to the bottom before Gene defeats his opponent and halts the plunge. Returning to the surface, he finds the guards' quarters momentarily deserted and is about to steal a horse but must quickly hide when an officer of the guard enters through the outer door. Gene jumps him, but their struggle happens to be caught by Tika on the visiphone. Before the guardsmen she dispatches can reach the scene, Gene tears off the officer's helmet, promising to return it to the strangling man in exchange for safe passage. The officer programs the gate robot to open the secret door and Gene escapes on a horse, shortly pursued by the Thunder Guard. Leaving his horse, Gene climbs a tree as the riders split up to search. When one spots the horse and rides alone beneath his tree, Gene jumps him, knocks him cold, and switches horses, spurring on the decoy which is immediately spotted by the other riders. The ruse works long enough for him to make a getaway.

Meanwhile, Beetson has obtained sufficient dynamite to begin excavating the old mine and the gang starts back. Frankie and Betsy have lit a fire and are sending smoke signals which are read by Gene who arrives on the double, finds the ladder, and rescues the youngsters who fill him in on their adventures. Just then Sharp lands the dynamite-laden plane and the trio hides as the gang approaches the ravine and, seeing the remains of the fire and the ladder down, assumes that intruders are in the tunnel and descends to investigate. Since Gene must return to the ranch for the daily broadcast soon to start, the three simply hijack Sharp and the plane. Attracted by the plane's engine, the gang runs from the mine to see it take off and realizes what happened upon recognizing Frankie and Betsy's mounts nearby.

A frustrated Tika complains to Mal that Gene is the only one who can identify the traitor. The Thunder Guard contacts her, requesting that she locate Gene for them on her TV, whereupon Argo, overhearing, alerts his men to be ready to start the revolt on his signal. Tika homes in on Gene and hears him about to reveal Murania's location. Outraged, but needing him alive, the queen orders officer Suma to aim an interference ray at the plane which will cut out the ignition system and advises the guard to watch for a forced landing.

Gene's Cowboy Quartette is carrying the program as well as they can when Gene, with some help from Frankie, manages to contact Eddie, the engineer using the plane's radio. A little quick patchwork and Gene is able to serenade his audience with "I'm Getting a Moon's Eye View of the World." He has just enough time to end the tune and sign off when the plane is struck by Suma's ray which kills the motor. Sharp panics. Grabbing Frankie's gun, he dons a parachute and bails out. It is now too late for the others to jump as the plane has just dived below minimum parachute height, so Frankie starts to jettison dynamite crates, one of which nearly hits the Thunder Riders while Gene tries to level the plane. He is partially successful, but the aircraft skims over a cliff edge, then drops to crash at the bottom of the chasm!

Chapter Nine: Prisoners of the Ray

As Gene holds the plane steady, Frankie and Betsy jump out just before it flies over the edge of the cliff. Tika is certain that Gene perished but, reminded by Mal that Frankie and Betsy could lead others to Murania, orders her guard to capture them, an act soon done and witnessed from a distance by the treacherous Sharp who is shortly joined by Beetson and the gang. The evil professor is jubilant at Gene's apparent demise, but Saunders is skeptical. "Well, we'd better make sure about Autry."

Eddie, alarmed when Gene's transmitter suddenly went dead, alerts Oscar, Pete and the Junior Riders who start a search, but the gang locates the unconscious Gene in the wreckage first and removes him to the old mine where they plan to revive him so that he can reveal the location of the entrance in Thunder Valley.

Meanwhile, Frankie and Betsy are escorted to the throne room to be questioned by Tika:

(Sound of gong)
GUARD: Prisoners of the realm for audience with the queen!
TIKA: So, you're the sprouts from which the people spring.
BETSY: I'm a girl!
FRANKIE: And I'm no sprout.
TIKA: Tell me, what do you think of Murania?
BETSY: Stuffy!
FRNKIE: You remind me of someone I've read about.
BETSY: It's the Ugly Duchess!
TIKA: Oh, so you think I'm ugly.
FRANKIE: No, you're not ugly; but as for Murania...well...
BETSY: Like "Allice in Wonderland:" "Off with their heads," and all such tripe!
TIKA: What would you say if I followed the plan of your Ugly Duchess and actually ordered your heads removed?
FRANKIE: I'd say you'd better look out for Gene when he heard about it.
TIKA: And what would your Gene do?
FRANKIE: He'd telephone the President and before you could wink an eye there'd be a regiment of artillery here knockin' the top off this palace!
TIKA: Silence!!
FRANKIE: Then there'd be airplanes droppin' bombs as big as barrels!
TIKA: Silence!!!
BETSY: And then what would be left of your Murania?
TIKA: Silence!!!! Take charge of them! And as for your Gene, it might interest you to know that he is...dead! Herewith and on royal edict I condemn the insolent offspring of savage surface men to a life of confinement in the lower dungeon. Remove them!
BETSY: Do you suppose Gene really is dead?
FRANKIE: No! She was just trying to scare us.

While being escorted to the cells, Frankie notices how the guards turn off the sentry robot's infra-ray activator, then trips the guards into each other and flees with his sister after resetting the sentry to slow down the pursuit.

The Junior Riders find Frankie and Betsy's horses, but quickly hide as Beeston and the gang exit the mine and ride off leaving two men to watch Gene, now faking unconsciousness. Oscar decoys the guards outside by yelling "Who's in there?" into the mine; then Pete and he stun them and free Gene who, having overheard Sharp's tale, informs them of the children's capture. Meantime, the youngsters find a hiding place in the communications chamber and listen as Tika, Argo and Mal enter and tune in on Gene whom they find leading the Junior Riders to the entrance in Thunder Valley. To prevent their instrusion, Argo suggests that the outer door be modified to transfer complete control to the communications room. Agreeing, Tika advises the Thunder Guard to immediately remove the electric eye (whose ray when broken opens the secret door) and the outer door mechanism, then threatens her interior guards with death if Frankie and Betsy are not soon recaptured. Hearing this, the teenagers immediately slip out through a nearby window to look for a safer hideout and thus do not see the safeguards prepared for the new outer door control lever.

By the time Gene and the others arrive, the surface renovations have been completed and he is unable to find the well-disguised entrance. As the party searches frantically, Frankie and Betsy, realizing the plight of their intended rescuers whom they know have by now reached Thunder Valley, return to the now deserted communications chamber to throw the control lever which will admit them. Confidently they approach and disarm a sentry robot guarding the switch. But there is another watchdog, deadly and invisible: an infra-ray which Frankie breaks as he throws the switch. Instantly an alarm sounds and the room is flooded with radium beams. The youngsters try to run but the rays sap their strength, forcing them to collapse on the floor bathed in an unceasing torrent of death-dealing radiation!

Chapter Ten: The Rebellion

Gene, Pete and Oscar are searching a little apart from the others. Oscar, recalling the tale of Ali Baba, remarks that it is a shame that the door will not respond to "Open Sesame!" Just as the words are uttered, Frankie pulls the switch and the three men are astonished to see the door open from seemingly solid rock. As they enter the guard's quarters, the alarm brings Tika on the run. She orders the alarm and the radium beam turned off, the youngsters taken to the revival chamber and from there to prison, and the outer door closed.

Spotted by the guard, Oscar and Pete temporarily give them the slip by descending the circular staircase to a lower level and locking themselves inside a foundry room staffed solely by robots. The guard manages to break down the door and searches fruitlessly for their quarry amongst the robot "blacksmiths" as others of their number capture Gene who is then taken to the throne room. The sidekicks escaped detection by hastily donning robot "suits" collected from a pile of spare outer shells. Once alone, they find the elevator and blunder their way down to the 33rd level by blindly pushing buttons. Once there, they try to blend in with the robot populace while seeking their friends by trying to lift some metal slabs, but of course failing. A passing guardsman sees their efforts and remarks to another, "These robots are about worn out. I guess we'll have to have them broken up."

A livid Tika accuses Gene of being a menace to Murania by popularizing Radio Ranch and demands that he reveal the traitor's name under pain of death. Gene refuses to save himself by talking unless his friends are spared as well, to which Tika agrees. Ordering the youngsters brought to her, she takes Gene to the communications room so that he may see that they are all right. Argo, certain that he will be exposed, advises guards loyal to him to report any developments while he leaves to set the revolt in motion.

While Tika is explaining the room's functions to Gene, one of the robot sentries, actually Oscar, knocks out her bodyguards as Pete takes care of

the communications officer. Instructed by Gene, Tika picks up Frankie and Betsy on the TV screen. Both are surprised to see Argo and his men escorting them to rebel headquarters to be held as hostages under heavy guard. Seeing this, Gene admits Argo is the traitor, having saved Gene in order to study his breathing structure; then tells all he knows of the planned revolt. They are unaware that one of Argo's spies is overhearing them.

Tika urges Gene to let her broadcast a general alarm but, fearing she will turn on him if freed, he refuses until Tika convinces him she intends to release them all to the surface if control of the city is returned to her. As a first step, she alerts the realm, branding Argo a traitor. The spy hurries to tell Argo that Gene has talked as the rebels hear Tika ordering "Death to Argo, by order of the crown!" Argo, in turn promising "Death to the queen!" leaves with his forces to begin the revolution.

As Tika dispatches men and weapons by TV, Gene, Oscar and Pete rescue Frankie and Betsy from their now unguarded cell. Argo has planned well, and Tika calls for the support of her loyal Thunder Guard as the rebels cut through a populace caught off guard. The surface people regain the 33rd level and, protected by the steel-suited Pete and Oscar, break through the swordfighting crowds and gain the elevator just as the palace falls. Argo takes over the communications room, thanking Tika for moving the surface door control down there as he now has Gene trapped. The rebels overcome the Thunder Guard and head off Gene's party which retreats down the circular staircase to the machinery foundry room where he is knocked cold after a short, vicious fight, falling onto a conveyor belt as the rebels are suddenly called away by an alarm. The belt carries Gene beneath a robot which is spot welding shell casings. The robot bends automatically, apparently thrusting the blazing welding torch directly into Gene's face!

Chapter Eleven: A Queen in Chains

Gene's friends, finding the pursuit gone, return to the foundry room just in tme to grab the torch. Reviving Gene, they regain the surface level only to find tha the manual outer door control is shorted out. While Oscar and Pete remove their robot suits, the others hear Argo issuing orders by visiphone for the party's destruction. He is sending an officer to demonstrate the melting powers of a new disintegrating ray gun with which all rebels are soon to be armed. Upon his appearance, Gene lassos the gun using a handy rope. Frankie and Betsy prod the rebels into a horse stall where Pete and Oscar bind them, then demolish the visiphone to forestall help. While the teenagers guard the captives, the others take the elevator to rescue Tika and try to regain the communications chamber so that the outer door may be opened.

On the 33rd level, to avoid capture, the three men have to hide amongst a group of sheeted casualties being tagged by medics either for the revival chamber or for the lime pits, according to condition. Oscar is astonished to hear he is slated for an extra-heavy life charge and also to find he has been tagged with a large sign saying "Dead." when the medics move off, Gene manages to reach the window of the communications chamber undetected but Oscar and Pete have to play possum and their shrouded bodies are carried off by bearers. As Ago arrogantly dispenses his brand of justice for Tika's loyal followers from her throne, Dr. Rab's assistant is in the revival chamber working on the casualties. As Rab enters and applies too much of the life current to one, however, it throws off the sheet kicking and screaming. It is, of course, Oscar. Joined by the "miraculously" revived Pete, the terrified duo scurry from he chamber, leaving in their wake two stunned men.

Argo has repaired to the communications room and, unaware of Gene's presence, is taking cruel pleasure in forcing a chained Tika to watch as the switch is pulled executing Mal and the royal consort in the death chamber. The current group of executions done until Argo can pass more sentences, Tika is removed to rebel headquarters to meet a slow doom by disintegration. Gene leaves and, finding Pete and Oscar, outline his plan to rescue her. He will enter the headquarters by the safest route, through the trapdoor in the death chamber, but his pals wil have to throw the switch at the count of 200. Making short work of the guard, Gene describes the proper switch and leaves to stand on the trap door as Oscar and Pete dispose of the communications officer.

In rebel headquarters, Rab is boasting of his new atom-smashing disintegrating ray machine to Tika. At full power, it could destroy civilization. To frighten her, Rab melts a metal block at low power and describes to the horrified former ruler how this machine will be used to destroy her. "I never heard," he sneers, "a queen scream." Meanwhile, Oscar and Pete have finished counting but neither remembers which is the trap switch."What are we gonna do?" asks Pete. Oscar's solution is as simple as he is. "Let's try all of 'em!" The action turns Murania into a madhouse, The elevator zips up and down at top speed, robots do crazy dances, doors open and close senselessly. The lightning chamber is also activated, but just then the trap switch is also thrown, dropping Gene to his destination just in time to knock Rab out cold and save Tika from a painful demise. Freeing her, Gene has no time to turn off the atom-smasher before he is jumped by two guards who have just entered. Tika flees as Gene fells one, but the other knocks him off balance into the wall where he slumps, half stunned, to the floor, his face in the path of the ray. Tearing at his collar in terrible pain, Gene cannot rise. He falls back unmoving, bathed by the merciless radiation.

Chapter Twelve: The End of Murania

Pete throws one more switch which sets off an alarm. Fleeing, Oscar and he end up in the death chamber and decide to escape through the still-open trapdoor. Seeing their friend's danger, they pull him from the ray just in time. Two rebels return with Tika, but Oscar and Pete turn out to be resourceful fighters. Suddenly Argo and his

COMING IN SERIAL WORLD "ROAR OF THE IRON HORSE"

men enter. "There they are," he shouts. "Make away with them!" Gene thinks quickly and cows the rebels by covering them with the still-operating atom-smasher and herding them into a corner. Gene is forced to lock his enemies in the same room with the ray gun which he has no time to remove nor disable.

Pete and Oscar manage to program two robots to strike down the throne room guards and the party gains the communications chamber. Argo has revived Rab and directs him to melt the locked door quickly with the atom-smasher, knowing how long he will live once Tika regains control of the city. He orders full power, but Rab protests as it is far too dangerous in a small space. Tika has tuned in the argument on the visiphone and watches in dismay as Argo, frightened and impatient, shoves Rab aside and turns the weapon on full. It is too much power, applied too quickly. Armageddon begins for Murania as the device, completely out of control and unstoppable, swings in every direction on its swivel base. Blood-chilling screams echo through the chamber as rebels perish in agony under the lethal light.

Tika, watching a once-proud city begin to die, orders Gene and the others to escape to the surface while she stays behind to open the outer door. Gene begs her to come with them, but the queen's reply is sharp. "To the mad world above? It would be a living death? A suffering far greater than the destiny that awaits me here." Seeing she cannot be dissuaded, Pete and Oscar bundle Gene into the elevator for its last trip to the surface where they discover Frankie and Betsy tied up in a stall. Mounting up swiftly, the five herd the remaining horses through the outer door, by now open, and ride for their lives. Tika, now alone, mounts her throne to meet the end in regal dignity. The outermost reaches of Murania, touched by the ray, shimmer, then dissolve, blending into a viscious liquid. The atom-smasher, fortunately for the surface civilization, is by now badly overloaded and suddenly explodes.

Meanwhile, Frankie is telling the others how much he learned about science in Murania as Gene muses over the profits to be made from the radium deposits still beneath the ranch. As the Junior Riders approach with the sheriff, Gene rides off to obtain evidence against Beeston while Frankie and Betsy cover him by trying to explain about Murania to the incredulous sheriff. Seeing this, the youngsters start to cry at mention of Gene's name and the lawman, assuming Gene has perished, leaves for Radio Ranch accompanied by the Junior Riders.

Back at the old excavation, Cooper has found that the radium deposits have moved some 3000 feet (due to Murania's destruction). Sharp and a heavy quit after being refused a large cut of the anticipated profits but, as they are mounting up, are shot by Beeston to ensure their silence. Sharp's horse, startled, runs off with him and Beeston, Cooper and Saunders start back to Radio Ranch to avert suspicion. Gene intercepts Sharp's horse but the man dies before he can reveal his killer's identity. However, the incident has given Gene an idea.

At the ranch, Frankie joins Gene in the lab and is told that one of the scientists is responsible for the deaths of Sharp and Baxter. Leaving through the secret passage, Gene openly returns later for the broadcast. He explains the deaths to the radio audience, stating that Sharp taked before dying. As he is about to "reveal" the killer's name, Beetson, listening, shoots at Gene from his room, knocking off his hat. The scientists panic and run for it, chased by the Junior Riders and Gene, whose sidemen quickly carry the program by singing "Come on Back." The Riders lasso Cooper and Saunders while Gene leaps, knocking Beetson off his horse and ending the struggle with one powerful blow, then hauling the scientist to his feet:

GENE: You're going back with me and tell 'em who killed Tom Baxter!
BEETSON: I don't know anything about it.
GENE: You know plenty. Sharp told me everything before he died.
BEETSON: (pauses) Sure I killed Tom Baxter. But how are you going to prove it? You'll never make the sheriff believe you didn't do it.
GENE: I think you're wrong there, pardner. That is, if Frankie learned anything about television down in Murania.

Unknown to Beetson, Frankie, Betsy and the sheriff are watching and hearing his confession on a TV set in the lab. The sheriff is pleased but puzzled:

SHERIFF: That sure clears Gene. How did you ever figure out this television thing?
FRANKIE: I've been working on it for a long time. All I needed was this little gadget. And I brought it from the Murania that you wouldn't believe in.

Next day, Gene performs "Uncle Noah's Ark" for his last broadcast of the season. He invites the radio audience to tune in when the new season begins and also to come up to Radio Ranch to "revisit" Murania. Gene signs off "wishing you all happiness and good luck."

The End

STUNTMAN SHARPE GETS CANUTT AWARD

Hailed for a career that began with Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s silent "Robin Hood" and ended last year with "Heaven Can Wait," stuntman David Sharpe was presented the Yakima Canutt Award at a National Film society sponsored luncheon Saturday at the Universal City Studio's commissary.

The award, created specifically to honor stuntmen, originated lat year, when it went to its namesake, Canutt, who is best known for having been John Wayne's double. Canutt was among the 350 actors, directors, stuntmen and film buffs who filled the banquet room on Saturday.

David Sharpe, now 72 and partially paralyzed by ALS "Lou Gehrig's disease"), sat in a wheelchair at the end of the dias and smiled broadly as fellow stuntman and actor Jock Mohoney read a list of Sharpe's varied expertises. They included juggling, wrestling, boxing, gymnastics, swimming, concert-level piano playing, acting, horsemanship and combat aviation (during WW II).

Sharpe's heyday spanned the late '30s and early '40s, when he stunted and acted in numerous serials and grade-B features for Republic Studios. His acrobatic leaps and vaults helped convey the illusion of human flight in the "Captain Marvel" and "Commander Cody" serials, while in another serial, "The Perils of Nyoka," he is said to have doubled for every member of the cast, including the women.

During this period, Mahoney said, "Producers were afraid to cast actors in action films unless they could be doubled by David Sharpe."

Sharpe's brief, emotional acceptance speech was the conclusion of the event, at which award plaques went to actor Don (Red) Barry, who hosted the luncheon, toastmaster Pat Buttram, songwriter-actor Bob Nolan of the Sons of the Pioneers, actors Bob Steele and Bob Livingston, actress Peggy Stewart, and director George Sherman. Also in attendance were more western heroes, Sunset Carson, Lash LaRue and Eddie Dean.

Dave Sharpe
ONCE KNOWN AS THE "CROWN PRINCE OF DAREDEVILS," DAVE BEGAN HIS MOVIE CAREER WAY BACK IN 1911, PLAYING A SMALL PART IN "THIEF OF BAGDAD" WHICH STARRED THE GREAT DOUG FAIRBANKS, SR.
EASY AS EATIN' PIE!
IMPRESSED BY DOUG'S ACROBATICS, DAVE LATER BECAME INTERESTED IN GYMNASTICS--GOOD ENOUGH TO BECOME THE NATIONAL TUMBLING CHAMPION AT AGE OF 20.
IN THE LATE 20'S, AFTER PLAYING IN A NUMBER OF SHORT COMEDIES FOR SEVERAL OF THE MAJOR STUDIOS, HE LANDED A CONTRACT WITH AJAX PRODUCTIONS CO-STARRING IN THE "YOUNG FRIENDS" SERIES.
THE 30'S WERE HIS PEAK YEARS-WORKING IN A VARIETY OF ACTION PICTURES FOR REPUBLIC STUDIOS AS AN ACTOR-STUNTMAN, ALONG WITH THE "KING OF STUNTMEN" YAK CANUTT--PRODUCING AMAZING & DAREDEVIL STUNTS THAT LEFT THE MOVIE AUDIENCES SPELL BOUND!
WITH 50 YEARS IN THE BUSINESS, AS A STUNTER, DAVE IS STILL ACTIVE IN BOTH THE MOVIES AND TV!!
MARIO DEMARCO

SERIAL MAILBAG

Dear Serial World:
You won't believe this, but I just returned from vacation and found a refund check from Syndicate Films! Yes, it's true. It took a while to find the right consumer agency, but here is the address if you want action concerning your own problem with this company: The Attorney General of Texas, Dallas Regional Office, 701 Commerce, Suite 200, Dallas, Texas 75202. (214) 742-8944. Once they got busy, Syndicate soon ponied up! Funny thing. Sol Harris, a friend who is also a SW subscriber, knows a serial fan in Puerto Rica who is an Air Force man with a milatary address. He ordered Syndicate's "Lone Ranger Rides Again" in VHS tape and is pleased with them as he received the tape in about one week! How about that? Sol holds the opinion that Syndicate didn't want any trouble with the government and played it straight for once. Come to think of it, I'd like that tape myself and they, unfortunately, are the sole distributor. If you get your refund or film it might be safe to do business with them as long as they know we can always call the Attorney General's office. Syndicate's letter to me mentions that the "Superman" trailer reel is only available in 16mm at present. I'm thinking it over.

A thought: you might save some time by writing directly to Syndicate, mentioning my name and the $13.95 I'd sent them for the "Superman" reel. Promise to write to the Attorney General if they don't come across and I'll bet you'll receive either the serial or a refund fast. This action will show Syndicate that people like us are not deaf, dumb, or blind and that we do spread the word about gyp film distributors.

Have just gotten in "Zorro's Fighting Legion" (excellent dupe) and have on order "Mystery Mountain" and "Burn-Em-Up Barnes." Also recently obtained several books with, among other info, serial credits of unbilled players. Just glancing through two of the books, I was able to add two new names to the cast of "Phantom Empire." I probably have the most complete cast and credit listing available on this item. A couple (such as the musical director) are not listed in the film itself.

Good luck. Will write soon.
Yours, Ron FLORIDA

Dear Serial World:
I would be most grateful for your permitting me to use your letters' column to ask your readers for help with a book on **Superman** I am now writing. I would like the dates (year or, better, year & month) of the following **radio** serial episodes: 1. S. finds glass-enclosed underwater city; 2. S. hit by atom bomb; 3. S. finds gangster by following trail of peanut shells; 4. S. offers premium of two phonograph records. I believe these were all broadcast between 1945-50, but I'd like more exact dates. Many, many thanks.
S.J. Estes, 205 East 78th St., New York, N.Y. 10021

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SERIAL BROCHURES: These color brochures, 8½ x 11, are printed on heavy stock and contain stills and chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the following Republic serials:

THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES	ADVENTURES OF RED RYDER	CAPTAIN AMERICA
DAREDEVILS OF THE WEST	ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION	DAREDEVILS OF THE RED CIRCLE
SPY SMASHER	KING OF THE MOUNTIES	DRUMS OF FU MANCHU

The above brochures are priced at $4.00 each plus .75¢ for postage on each brochure ordered.

SERIAL STILLS: Linda Stirling in "Zorro's Black Whip," Buck Jones and Dorothy Fay in "White Eagle," Buster Crabbe, Charles Middleton and Wheeler Oakman in "Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars," Victor Jory in "The Shadow," Bill Elliott and Carmen Morales in "Valley of Vanishing Men," and Scott Kolk and Jean Rogers in "Secret Agent X-9." All are priced at $2.00 each.

WESTERN STILLS: John Wayne (3 different), Clint Eastwood (2 different), Gary Cooper, Tom Mix and Louise Lovely in "The Fued," Charles Starrett as The Durango Kid with Smiley Burnette, Tex Ritter, Randolph Scott, Errol Flynn, William Boyd as Hopalong Cassidy and Robert Redford as The Sundace Kid. All are priced at $2.00 each.

OTHER STILLS: Johnny Weissmuller as Tarzan, Boris Karloff, Boris Karloff as The Frankenstein Monster, Lon Chaney as The Wolfman, Lon Chaney Sr as The Phantom of the Opera, Warner Oland as Charlie Chan with Rita Hayworth in "Charlie Chan in Egypt," Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes (3 different), Walter Pidgeon and Robby the Robot in "Forbidden Planet," James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart. All are priced at $2.00 each.

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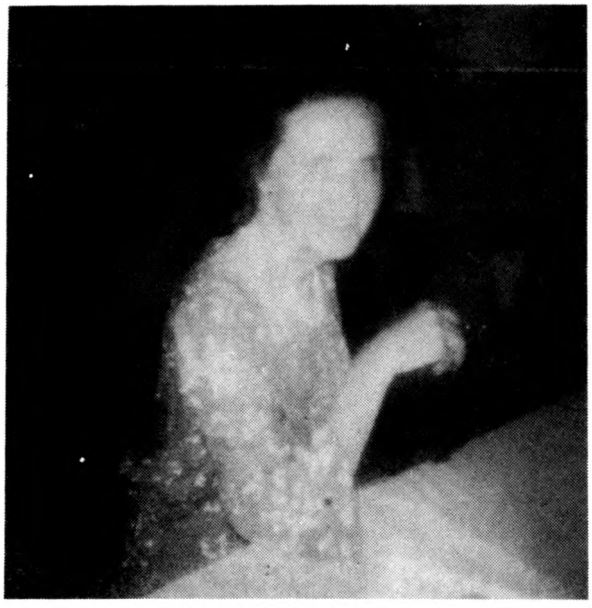
WESTERN FILM FAIR - Held July 11th to 14th, 1979



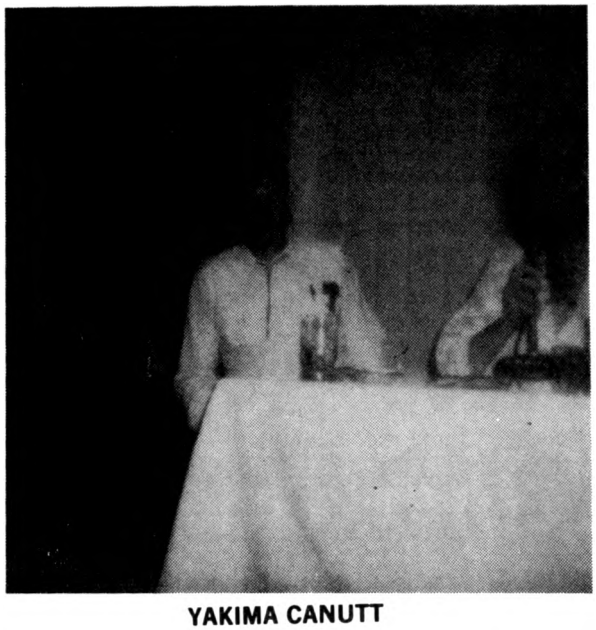
KAY ALDRIDGE

JOAN WOODBURY

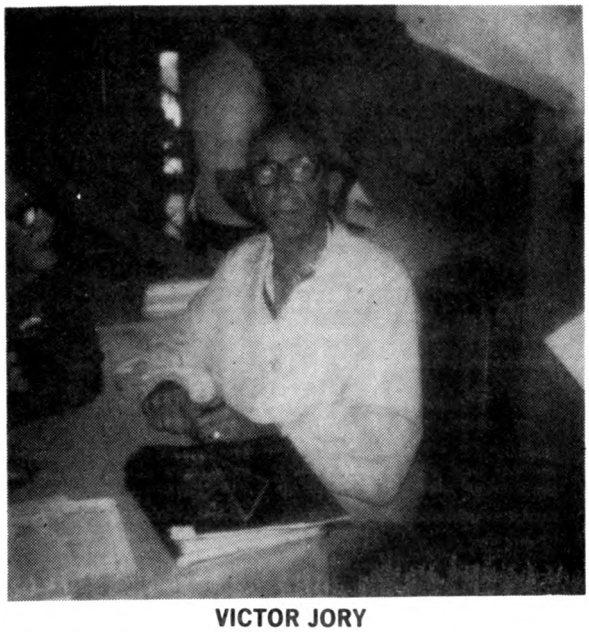
PHOTOS AND STORY BY JEFF WALTON

I've got to thank fellow serial buffs Jim Hitt and Bruce Furman for talking me into going to the 2nd Annual Western Film Fair which was held last July 11-14 in St. Louis, MO. While the hotel could have been better, I'm not here to write about that. The Film Fair was just great. A few of the "guests" did not show for various reasons. Among those who could not make it were Jimmy Wakely, Rod Cameron, Dale Robertson. Those who did appear were Oliver Drake, noted Western film writer, Victor Jory, Don "Red" Barry, Joan Woodbury, Kay Aldridge, Yakima Canutt, famed stuntman, James Brown of Rin Tin Tin fame, Myrna Dell.

Although the basic theme was Western Films, such great serials as The Shadow, G-Men vs. The Black Dragon, Roaring West, Secret Code, The Vigilante, Red Ryder, and various serial samplers were shown. On Friday a Western buffet was held and although it rained outside by the pool, the food was outstanding. Various panels provided some remarkable facts about the stars. The photos on this page were taken during the panels. Dealer's room was super big. Lots of 16mm film for every kind of collector with wheeling and dealing going on all the time. To sum it up it was a great convention and I know where I'll be next year come Western Film Fair time. Now is the time to start thinking about joining me.



YAKIMA CANUTT



VICTOR JORY

SERIAL WORLD
INTERVIEWS
WALTER REED
BY GREGORY R. JACKSON JR.

Over the years I've interviewed many actors and actresses for SERIAL WORLD and most of my interviews were done at their homes. For the first time, a serial star came to my home for an interview and I was delighted to finally meet Walter Reed. He is a highly intelligent, witty, and extremely friendly gentleman and told me many fascinating facts about his long career in show business.

Walter Reed was featured in 150 motion pictures and 400 television shows. In 1951 he starred in two serials for Republic Studios. In the first one, FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS, Walter Reed played Kent Fowler, an aviator and owner of a fleet of airplanes. Fowler is hired to patrol the skies after an unidentified flying object is spotted and he is soon involved in one battle after another with henchmen working for Mota, a scientist from Mars, who is attempting to conquer the earth. Walter Reed's second serial was GOVERNMENT AGENTS VS. PHANTOM LEGION. This time he played government agent Hal Duncan, who is trying to stop a wave of truck hijackings caused by a gang led by a mysterious villain known only as "The Voice."

The following is the interview Walter Reed granted me for SERIAL WORLD:

SW: Your brother is Jack Smith, who is famous for doing the YOU ASKED FOR IT television series. So is Reed or Smith your real last name?

WR: My name is Walter Reed Smith -- that's the name I was born with. I went to school out here and everybody knew me at LeConte Junior High and at Hollywood High and Beverly Hills High as Reed Smith. I was brought out to RKO Studios from New York. They had Kent Smith there and a fellow named Bob Smith and they wanted to change my name. I said, "Okay, anything you want." A guy in the publicity department said, "I've got just the name for him: Stark Nolan." And a girl looked at me and said, "I think it ought to be 'Stark Naked.'" I said, "That did it, brother. Just take off the last name." I changed my name legally to Walter Reed when my son was born 36 years ago.

SW: Whenever I hear you name, I think of the famous hospital.

WR: I was in it. I was in a show called WINGED VICTORY during the war. Peter Lind Hayes and I were up at the Variety Club one night and we got in an argument over something. I swung at Pete and he ducked and I hit the wall and broke my hand. A heart specialist set my hand in a cast and it got infected. I got gangrene under my arm and almost lost half my hand. When I got to Washington, it smelled so badly out of the cast that they put me in Walter Reed Hospital and they kept me there for 8 months. I almost lost 2 fingers.

SW: Where were you born?

WR: I was born in Seattle, Washington. My father was an army officer. My brother Jack Smith was named John Ward Smith after Fort Ward.

SW: So how did you get into show business?

WR: Well, I was brought up in Hollywood. My father was retired and we came down to Los Angeles. I knew Edward G. Robinson and his step daughter. I went to school with Charley Chase's daughter Polly, Francine Blystone whose father was a famous director, Chic Sale's daughter, and many others and I was kind of forced into show business. Charlie Farrell was a good friend of my family and he got me into a little show. Finally, I went on an interview for a picture called REDSKIN with Richard Dix and got a part. In those days you went on location by train. The club car had a little balcony off the end. Richard Dix was getting a little high on booze. He was saying, "Look, you changed the script and I told you that I wouldn't do it if you changed any of the dialogue." And the guy he was talking to said, "It's too late now; we're on our way to Colorado." Dix said, "Well, I won't do it." And the guy said, "The hell you won't." So Richard Dix went to that little balcony off the club car and opened the door and threw his false teeth overboard. They backed the train but didn't find them. That was my introduction to show business.

SW: How old were you then?

WR: I was 13 when I made my first picture.

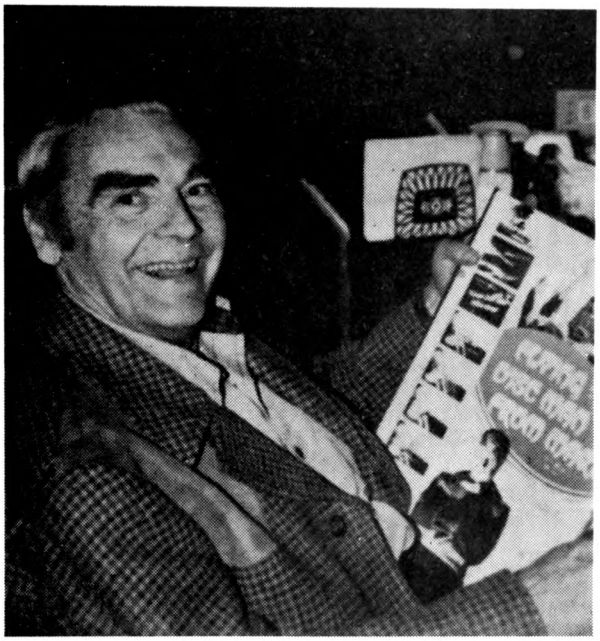
SW: What happened next?

WR: Well, later on Joel McCrea helped me a great deal. I stood in for him when I was 16. Later on I went back east and I was in Kennebunk, Maine in a stock company when I heard that Joel was in town. I called up the hotel and he said he would come over and see the play. I was playing Baby Faced Martin in DEAD END. He and Frances Dee came back and just raved about it. Joel said I was ready for Hollywood and came back here and told his agent. Then his agent called me and they flew out here and the next day I had a contract at RKO.

SW: So that's how you got into movies. But you did radio too. You were in Cecil B. DeMille's production of HITLER'S CHILDREN on the LUX RADIO THEATER.

WR: Well, I didn't do a lot of radio. I did that LUX RADIO THEATER and a lot of SKIPPY PEANUT BUTTER RADIO SHOWS but that was because I was under contract at RKO and the publicity department wanted it. Tim Holt had

WALTER REED - 1951



WALTER REED - 1979

played my part in the movie version of HITLER'S CHILDREN but he had already gone into the service and I was just about to go in. So the publicity department told the LUX RADIO THEATER to take me or they couldn't do it. You see, I was being built by the studio then. I had done BOMBARDIER and a couple of other good pictures and I was very hot right at that time. I did SEVEN DAYS LEAVE with Vic Mature, Lucille Ball, and Hal Peary. When Buddy Rogers went into the service, I took his place in the last 2 Mexican Spitfire pictures (MEXICAN SPTIFIRE'S ELEPHANT and MEXICAN SPITFIRE'S BLESSED EVENT) starring Lupe Velez. But when you are under contract, you do what they tell you to do; so I did everything. Then when I did HITLER'S CHILDREN on LUX RADIO THEATER, Cecil B. DeMille really seemed to like me. He wanted me to come over and play the second lead in THE STORY OF DR. WASSELL starring Gary Cooper. I thought, "My God!" when Cecil B. DeMille was after me. It was going to be a big break for me but I went into the service and Dennis O'Keefe got my part. RKO was going to loan me out at about 10 times what I was getting. The studio would have made the money but it probably would have helped my career a lot. So I was very hot right in those days and then when I came back from the service they said, "Who's he?"

SW: What year did RKO sign you to a contract?

WR: I was signed in 1941 and left in 1943 for the army and came back late in 1945.

SW: So the war ruined your career.

WR: Hey, you can't squawk at that. But it's amazing what 2½ years will do for your career when you're hot.

SW: Did you free-lance after the war?

WR: No, I was under contract for another couple of years but I never really got the parts I wanted; there were too many changes of regime at RKO.

SW: So after free-lancing, how did you get to Republic Studios?

WR: The only time I worked at Republic Studios was in 1951 making those 2 serials.

SW: But you must have done more at Republic because I've seen you in a Rocky Lane western called WELLS FARGO GUNMASTER which also featured Roy Barcroft.

WR: Now wait a minute. I did work with Allan "Rocky" Lane somewhere. You're right; it was at Republic. I also did a lot of Gene Autry's Flying A television shows like ANNIE OAKLEY and BUFFALO BILL JR. But we made so little dough on those things. And they were potboilers; we only made them to keep the wolf from the door.

SW: Did you feel those TV shows weren't good enough for you?

WR: I never did anything I thought was beneath me. There are 2 kinds of actors: the kind of actor who says he'll hold out until he gets everything he wants, and the kind of actor who takes these things. I'm a great believer that an actor is one who acts. If you just talk about it and you're out of work for a year, how can you call yourself an actor? I'll admit that's the great career but I wanted to work.

SW: But don't forget you were the leading man in both these serials.

WR: Oh hey, that's nothing. They could be shown in the men's room of the Astor Hotel as far as I'm concerned. But I never laughed at them. After all, serials served a purpose. The kids absolutely adored them. You had to take serials seriously. They are very high camp now, but in those days you didn't laught at them. We did them seriously and that's what makes them funny today. Serials are a cult now. I did THE TORCH in Mexico opposite Paulette Goddard and the best picture I ever made was SEVEN MEN FROM NOW with Randy Scott, Gail Russell, and Lee Marvin. But I've got more publicity from FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS than any picture I ever made.

SW: Then let's talk about that serial.

WR: One of the reasons I did pictures at Republic was that they had stock shots with Ralph Byrd. They really wanted me because I look a lot like Ralph and we moved a lot alike. They said that from 15 feet away you couldn't tell us apart.

SW: I'd like to show you some photos from Republic's 1942 serial KING OF THE MOUNTIES. Ever see this plane before?

WR: That's the same plane they used in FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS, isn't it? I never knew that.

SW: Yes, Republic used it again 9 years later in your serial.

WR: That is funny.

SW: In KING OF THE MOUNTIES the plane was built by Japanese agents and thus had a rising sun painted on it. So wasn't it a bit odd that in 1951 in your serial, the plane that was supposed to be from Mars had that rising sun painted on it?

WR: That's absolutely amazing. They could have at least painted that off.

SW: No, they couldn't, because if they removed the Japanese rising sun from the plane, it wouldn't have matched their stock footage. Also notice that the aerial torpedo in this photo from KING OF THE MOUNTIES was also used in your serial. Now look at this photo of Roy Barcroft from his 1945 serial THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES. Republic used the rocket landing on earth from THE PURPLE MONSTER STRIKES in FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS, and Gregory Gay, who played the Martian "Mota" used Roy Barcroft's Purple Monster outfit. And James Craven played the Martian's assistant in both serials. Now let's talk about some of the actors you worked with in FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS. Sandy Sanders played your assistant Steve.

WR: You have to have somebody to talk to in a serial. You have to have somebody to play off of. Instead of showing a lot of stuff sometimes in an action shot, he can say, "What did you do about so and so?" and then I can answer him. So Sandy played that kind of part.

SW: Frankly, I haven't heard of him in anything else.

WR: He wasn't much of an actor but he was a nice guy. He was a horseman really. He had a beautiful Arabian horse that did tricks.

SW: The leading lady was played by Lois Collier.

WR: She was married to an agent when I knew her.

SW: Gregory Gay as Mota gave orders to James Craven and he had two henchmen played by Harry Lauter and Richard Irving.

WR: Dick Irving is an executive producer. In fact, I think he's a vice president at Universal. But Dick hates to have anybody know that he once was an actor. Harry Lauter is still around. He's an old friend of mine. I did a lot of shows with him. After I did these two serials at Republic, they asked me to do another one and I wouldn't do it. So Harry took my place and played the lead in a serial.

SW: Harry Lauter starred in two Republic serials: TRADER TOM OF THE CHINA SEAS and KING OF THE CARNIVAL. Do you know which one they wanted you to do?

WR: No, I don't. After I did two serials, I was afraid that I would get typed in them. Remember, serials were just about gone by then. When they wanted me to do more serials, I said, "To hell with the serials" because by then I'd done FIGHTER SQUADRON and a couple big pictures at Warners and I was doing real well. Frankly, I did the two serials for eating money. But now I like them because they're very high camp and I enjoy them because we took it so seriously.

Walter Reed and author Greg Jackson Jr. pose for Serial World readers.

SW: Everyone certainly looked serious.

WR: We had to take the serials seriously because we had a tremendous responsibility. We'd do 68 setups in one day. You don't even do that kind of thing on TV. We'd do 20 pages of script a day. That's why they liked me; I could remember the dialogue. They'd tell me to drive to the end of the street and I'd do it. Then I'd turn around and come back and I couldn't find them--that's how fast they moved.

SW: How did the cast of FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS get along?

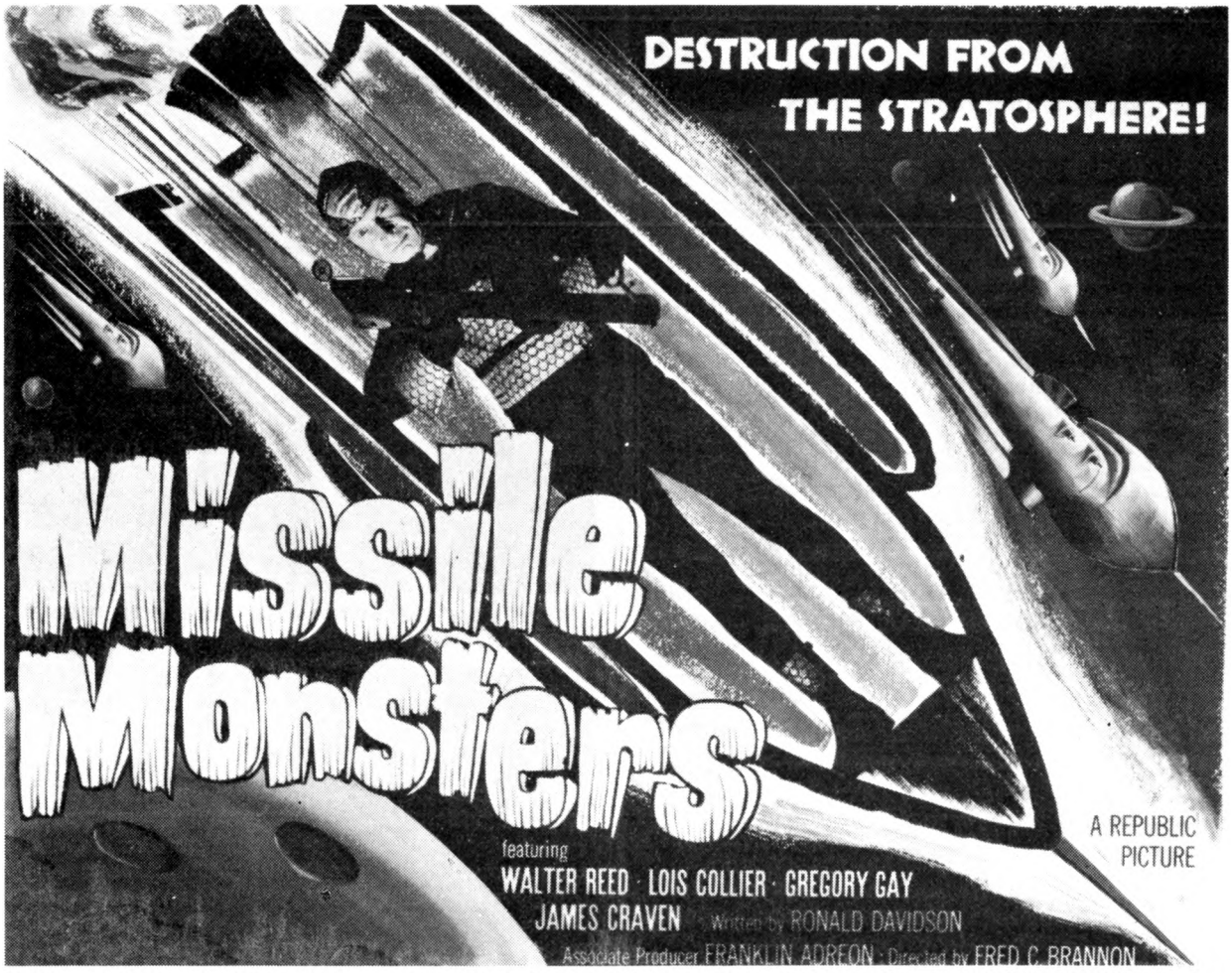
WR: Oh beautifully. The main thing is that we harldy knew each other. We were so busy trying to remember our lines that I can't even remember meeting Gregory Gay and James Craven. I know I had a scene with them but we just said, "Hello," and did the dialogue. I hardly knew them.

SW: Well, that's because they played the bad guys and were in hardly any of the scenes you did. Now let's talk about some of the stunt men in FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS.

WR: Johnny Daheim was one of the top stunt men and Dick Crockett was a great stunt man, too. Carey Loftin was the greatest man on wheels-I'm talking about motorcycles and cars - that ever lived. Of course, Dave Sharpe was the finest man on his feet that I ever knew as far as a stunt man is concerned. He was one of the greatest that ever lived. Anybody could fall off a balcony but Dave would fall off without getting hurt. He was an acrobat from the circus in his younger days, so he could tumble. He would do more things without getting hurt than anyone else, and to me that's the art; you're a stunt man then.

SW: Who doubled for you in FLYING DISC MAN FROM MARS?

WR: Dale Van Sickel. He was the best double I ever had. He was the only All-American football player that ever came out of Miami University. He's dead now. He was a good actor too. I liked him.



Lobby card from feature version of Republic's "Flying Disc Man From Mars" - Missile Monsters, starring Walter Reed.

SW: The cliffhanger at the end of chapter 2 showed you on a railroad bridge with no room to escape and a train approaching. Then you dropped under the railroad tracks and hung under the trestle.

WR: You had to be in good shape for that. They told me to hang from there and then do a chinup; to pull myself up to see the train coming and then drop down again. Well, they asked me to do that about ten times and I said, "I can't do another chinup. Hey, this isn't the Olympic Games, you know. Get Dale Van Sickel and shoot him from the back." But I'll tell you something: after four weeks of being on one of those serials, you're in good shape.

SW: The most traditional resolution to a cliffhanger is for a hero to jump out of a car before it explodes or goes over a hill. The car being destroyed would actually, of course, by a miniature made by the Lydecker brothers, Republic's brilliant special effects team. But how did they film the shot right before that? We'd see you jump out of a car, but is there really a stunt man hidden in the car who's steering the car even though he can't see where he's going?

WR: Let me tell you what happened once. Davey Sharpe was blind driving --- they put a black thing over the car. Now as the car is going down a hill, there's what they call an apple box, just a little crate, and as the thing is going, I run right alongside the car, jump on this apple box and they leave the door open. Then as the car passes, they pan over to me and after I leave the apple box, I roll over and it looks exactly like I jumped out of the car. The car just keeps going since Davey is still blind driving it. I did this one day up on the top of Mulholland Drive and the next day I got up and they had to take 68 ticks out of my back. They didn't hurt but it took them about a half hour before we could start shooting.

SW: What did you think of Fred C. Brannon, who directed both of your serials?

WR: I had a little argument with Freddie when we first started. He was kind of a bully and I was young and handsome in those days, and he started to goat me a little. I finally got him behind a set and grabbed him and said, "Hey, knock it off or I'm going to throw you right through this set." And he said, "You mean it, don't you?" and I said, "Yes," and we became good friends.

Walter Reed talks about the filming of GOVERNMENT AGENTS vs. PHANTOM LEGION, Allan "Rocky" Lane, Vera Hruba Ralston, and his very close friend, George "Superman" Reeves in the conclusion of this interview in SERIAL WORLD #20.

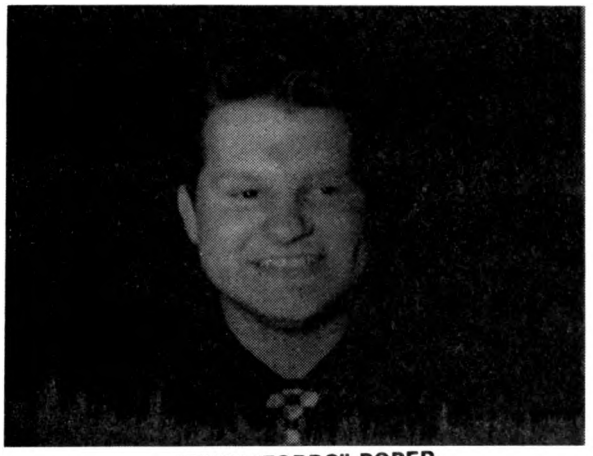
AUDIO SCRIPT FROM THE **TODAY SHOW** SEGMENT ABOUT THE CLIFFHANGERS' CLUB.
BROADCAST ON THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1979

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE JIM SHOENBERGER, JIM SUMMERS, MARLENE KLING, JERRY "ZORRO" POPEK, BOB SLAPKE, LOU NANNA AND BILL WELLS.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO NBC FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT THIS SCRIPT

ERIC BURNS: The members of the Cliffhangers' Clube are an accountant, a mailman, a customer relations man but that's what they do now...what's importatnt is what they did many years ago.
JIM SHOENBERGER: Many of us...we did our little errands, we had our grocery delivery jobs, we had our newspaper delivery jobs, we caddied. We did that to get a thin dime back in the nineteen thirties and we took these thin dimes and went to the Saturday matinees.
ERIC BURNS: Their favorite part of the Saturday matinees was the Cliffhangers such as "Perils of the Darkest Jungle." One Saturday's episode would end with Tiger Woman lying unconscious in a motor boat that was just seconds away from crashing into a paddlewheeler and they'd wonder all week how Tiger Woman was going to get out of this predicament and they'd come back next week and find out...and so it would go, Saturday after Saturday after Saturday...all through childhood...the Cliffhangers' Club is their way of reliving their matinee days.
BILL WELLS: I can remember when we came out of the theaters, everyone was galloping down the streets, slapping their hip as if they were Buck Jones on a horse or the Lone Ranger or Roy Rogers on Don "Red" Barry.
MARLENE KLING: These kinds of times, don't exist anymore for my kids.
ERIC BURNS: When Jim Shoenberger was a little boy, he saw the first few episodes of a Cliffhanger called *"The Iron Claw"...but he missed the episode in which the identity of the Iron Claw was revealed...he didn't find out who the Iron Claw was till he had grown up and founded the Cliffhangers' Club and gotten the film from a company called The Nostalgia Merchants.
JIM SHOENBERGER: You know what it means to wait twenty to twenty-five years to find out who the Iron Claw is? Do you have any comprehension of that?
ERIC BURNS: It would take that long?
JIM SHOENBERGER: Since the films were withdrawn, the theaters...
ERIC BURNS: Oh, I see.
JIM SHOENBERGER: And then the...
ERIC BURNS: So it was twenty-five years of...of frustration?...Loneliness? Emptiness?
JIM SHOENBERGER: You have a way of putting things, Eric. I wanted to e that fellow on the screen. I wanted to rough and tumble. I wanted to do everything that fellow up there did because I knew he stood for everything that I was taught was right.
ERIC BURNS: This is a room, just down the hall from the room in which the members of the Cliffhangers' Club are hanging on to what remains of childhood...most of the people on this wall are people that you probably never heard of...for instance, Kirk Alyn, the original Superman...Nigel De Brulier as Old Shazam...John Hart as Captain Africa, shown gritting his teeth at a lion. Not big names but to the members of the Cliffhangers' Club and probably to millions of others, these were very important people at a very formitave time.
JIM SHOENBERGER: They were heroes in those days, Eric. They were somebody I could respect, somebody I could emulate, even...
ERIC BURNS: Now, would...would you...would you leave a serial and emulate Zorro?...Would you get a sword?...
JIM SHOENBERGER: I would indeed.
ERIC BURNS: And cut a "Z" in someone's pants, for instance?
JIM SHOENBERGER: With the least provocation. The whirl of this projector, Eric...is like the whirl of H.G. Wells' time machine. For a few brief minutes, it takes me back to that period in a vicarious fashion. It was a happy, untroubled period.
ERIC BURNS: And as long as the projector keeps whirling, the period will never end. The episodes maybe but not the period...for TODAY, this is Eric Burns, NBC News, Chicago.

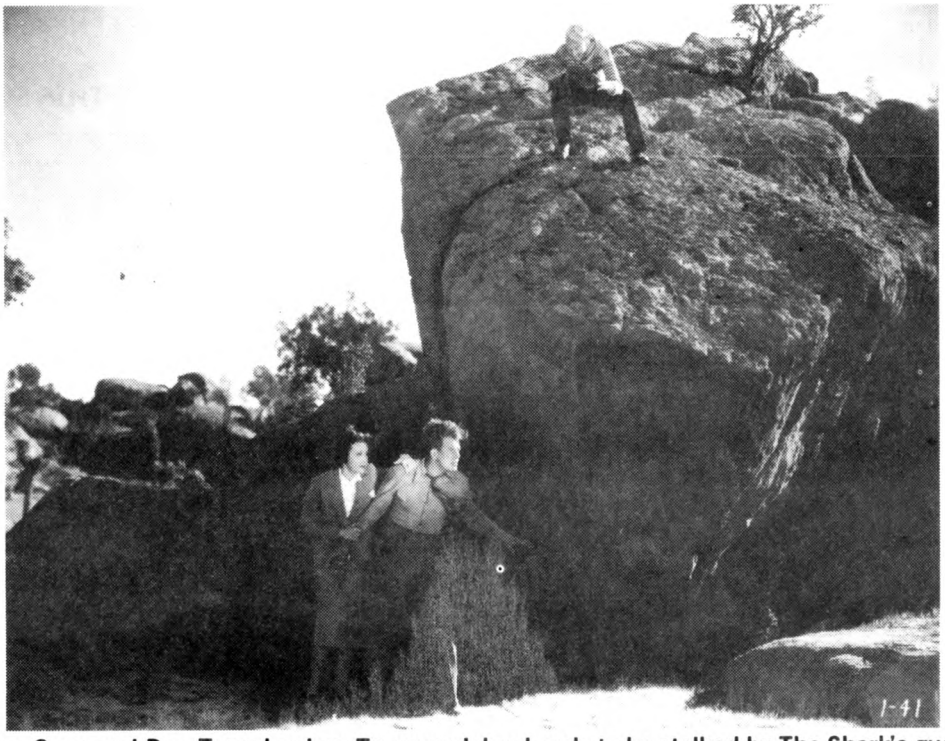
*"The Iron Claw" can not be obtained from The Nostalgia Merchants as they deal exclusively in Republic serials.



JERRY "ZORRO" POPER

JIM SHOENBERGER WITH MYRON HEALEY

THE SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND



Ambush: Gwen Gaze and Don Terry land on Treasure Island, only to be stalked by The Shark's guards. Several chapters featured fist fights begun by a leap from the island's great boulders.

CONTINUED FROM ISSUE NO. 18

Chapter Seven: The Cannon Roars

Cuttle blasts a hole in the sea side of the tunnels to give the water a new outlet, and it quickly drains from the cell. Larry overpowers a returning guard and frees himself with the man's key. Toni enters a passage from the room of doors in an attempt to escape Collins' people. Larry returns to the house, encountering Collins, who thinks he carries the map. He escapes, but the Shark sends sword wielding guards after him. He battles them, but is forced to leap into the sea from a high window to escape.

Jameson and Jerry are attempting to escape the island in a speed boat and pull Kent aboard. Toni reaches the shore and swims out to them. Guards spot them, and Collins opens fire with a cannon, destroying the boat. Larry and Toni pull Jerry ashore, but Jameson is dead. Grindley, Dr. X, and Zanya join forces to beat Collins to the treasure. Larry recovers the knife before the guards arrive. Back at the house, momentarily alone, he makes a fake map. Grindley sees him hide it in his pants cuff. Toni is in her room, where the suit of armor comes alive again and strikes down the guard. She screams as the menacing figure turns toward her!

Chapter Eight: The Circle of Death

The Professor steps out of the armor and tells Toni he will help her escape the island. He sends her into a secret passage. Collins and the guards search Larry and find the false map, then the reporter fights them and escapes. The professor sends Toni up a cliffside ladder to the old lookout house at Vulture's Peak, Larry sees them from a distance. The volcano erupts, and Toni takes shelter in the building. Grindley sees this and locks her in. Flaming volcanic debris crashes down, firing the old house. Larry hears her screams, and arrives to smash in the door and carry her from the building as it is destroyed. He takes her to the ladder, but Grindley appears, demanding the real map. Larry jumps him. As they fight, the ladder is knocked away from the cliff. Clinging to it, Toni falls through space!

Chapter Nine: The Pirate's Revenge

A tree slows and then stops the falling ladder. Kent knocks Grindley out and climbs down to pull Toni to safety. Collins discovers that the map is a fake, and sends Cuttle and the guards after Larry and Toni. Cuttle finds them, tells them that Thorndyke has been forced to "walk the plank," and insists that they leave the island immediately. He sends them to the tunnel beneath his home, where a hidden trap door opens into a passageway that extends to the mainland. Dr. X, searching Cuttle's place, sees them enter the tunnel and reports to Grindley. With Zanya, they follow the fugitives.

A statue in the tunnel is a landmark mentioned on the map, but Larry discovers that he lost it in the fight. They try to return to Vulture's Peak, but are soon hopelessly lost. They pound on the tunnel walls seeking an exit, and find one - into Collins' study. The Shark has heard them, and opened a panel to recapture them. He wants the real map, and has Toni's hands bound, then puts her on "the plank," which is run out of a top floor window. Larry is unable to produce the map, and she is forced to step off into space. Toni falls toward the surf below!

Chapter Ten: The Crash

As Toni sinks into the water, Larry breaks free and dives after her. He pulls her ashore, and they enter a cave to elude the arriving guards. The passage leads to the trap door to Cuttle's home. He finds them there and learns further details of their quest, reacting strongly to the names Westmore and Faxton. Also present is Cuttle's pet crow, Jim, who stuffs the captain's tobacco jar with scraps of paper he picks up - one of which is Toni's portion of the map! Cuttle sends them into the tunnel to the mainland again. Grindley and his partners overhear this. Collins sends guards into the tunnels, but the Ghost drives them off and Toni and Kent reach Cortez.

Cuttle arrives at the hotel where they are staying, then Grindley comes in and sends three men to attack Kent whle he goes after Toni. Larry battles them in his room, then jumps out the window - onto a horse-drawn dynamite wagon! The team runs wild, but he rides them to safety as the wagon breaks loose and explodes. He returns to town, where another gangster is driving off with Toni, supposedly to meet him at the ship. Larry grabs another car and follows them, pursued in turn by Grindley. He follows the gunman when he cuts in front of a speeding train, but goes out of control trying to force the other car off the road. He swerves into a boulder and cracks up!

Chapter Eleven: Dynamite

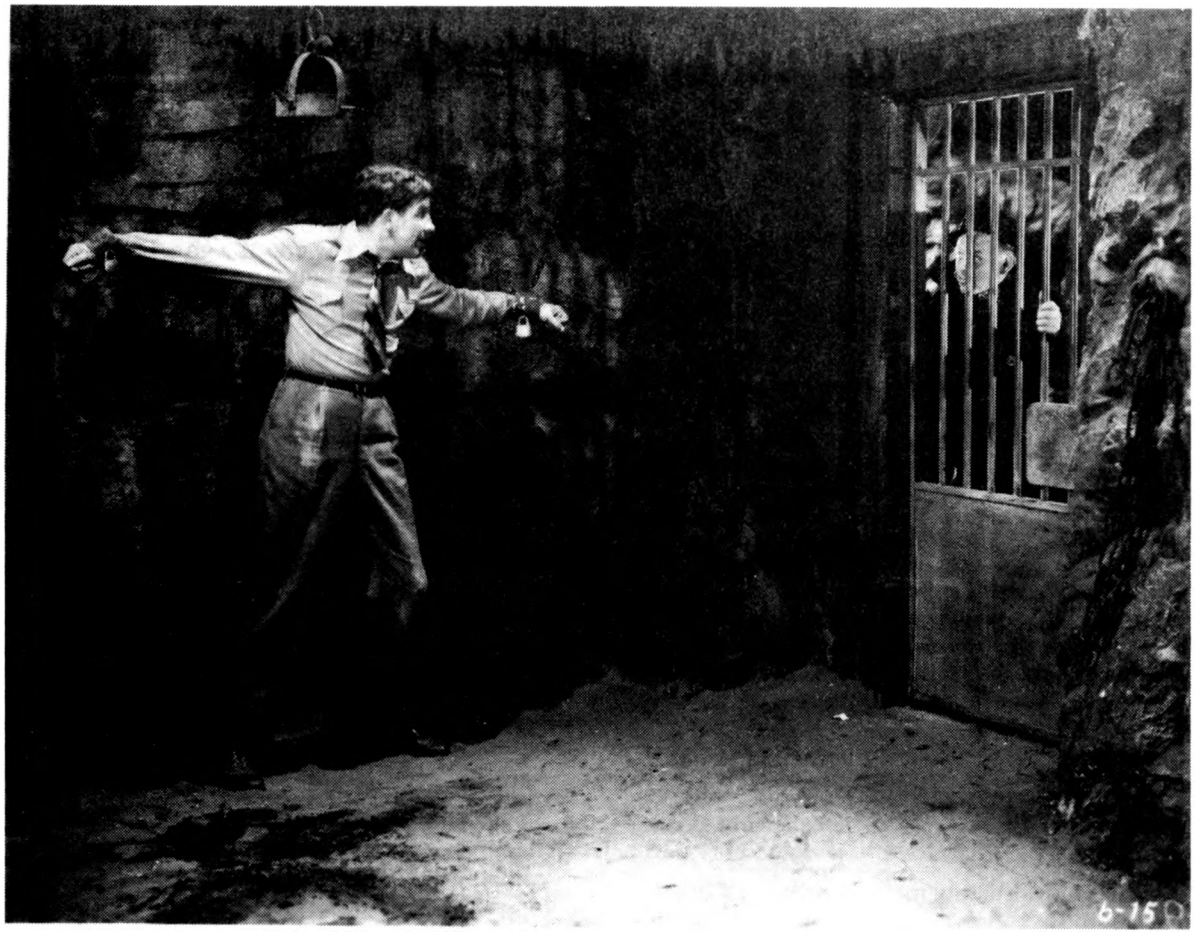
Larry climbs from the wreckage. Toni realizes she has been tricked and escapes from her captor when his car stalls. He chases her, but Larry runs up, knocks him out, and takes her back to Cortez in the man's car. Grindley arrives to pick up his henchman. Larry and Toni board the Dolphin to return to the United States - as do Cuttle, Grindley, Dr. X, and Zanya. Grindley attacks Kent on deck, knocking him overboard into the shark infested waters. He is rescued by fishermen and returned to Cortez, where he hires a fast boat owned by one Morgan. Grindley's men learn of this and plant a time bomb in the engine compartment.

Grindley sends Zanya to gain Toni's confidence, then enters the room and threatens the girls, eventually forcing Toni to attempt to draw the map from memory to protect Zanya from him. Morgan and Larry near the steamer, and are trying to hail her when Morgan smells smoke. Ken opens the engine compartment, sees the bomb, and shouts a warning. They jump as the boat is blasted apart!

Chapter Twelve: The Bridge of Doom

Larry survives the explosion, and the Dolphin lowers a boat to pick him up. He goes to Toni's captin with ship's officers, and Grindley is arrested. When the ship docks, Dr. X and Zanya knock out a guard with the gas pistol and release him, taking h im ashore disguised as a crewman. Larry sends Toni off to a hotel with the map. Cuttle follows her, as do Dr. X and Zanya. Kent takes a cab for police headquarters, but Grindley appears and fights him, jumping clear as the vehicle runs off the pier into the ocean. Larry is pulled ashore unconscious, given artificial respiration, and placed in an ambulance. Grindley rides along as "a friend."

The Shark's Warning: George Rosener, player, William Royle, player, Colin Campbell, Hobart Bosworth, Sandra Karina, and Patrick J. Kelly hear Walter Miller (center) announce that no one will leave Treasure Island alive.



On Treasure Island, Collins shows the Professor a few gold coins, and orders him to make a chest full of bronze copies from old statues found on the island. Grindley slugs the ambulance attendant, then searches Larry, who revives and fights him. They struggle by the open door of the speeding vehicle. Toni's cab is stalled in traffic, and when the driver gets out to fight the trucker blocking them, Cuttle climbs aboard and drives off. Seeing Zanya and Dr. X follow, he turns into a trestle. The pursuers are blocked, but a train appears! Cuttle shouts a warning and they jump. The train crashes into the cab!

Chapter Thirteen: The Mad Flight

Toni and Cuttle clear the taxi and fall into the ocean as it is destroyed. Larry knocks Grindley out of the ambulance. Cuttle drops Toni at her hotel, then searches Faxton's home, where he finds papers including the letter and a ship's log. He goes to Westmore and explains that he had determined to help Toni when she first arrived on the island. He knew something of her story, and the papers fill in several gaps: Faxton - under another name - had been Westmore's partner when they bought the map. Toni is Westmore's daughter, born, unknown to him, after his wife left him. Collins had stolen his half of the map.

The Professor has completed the "gold" coins, and Collins has them planted in a tunnel - then brings Jerry in to witness his finding them. He explains that his portion of the map carries a coded message showing that Toni Morrell is his own daughter. Now, he wants to share the treasure with her. He asks Jerry to phone the news to Toni, but without mentioning his name because she still fears him. She is to return to the island with her part of the map which, joined to the other, will finally solve the mystery of her family. Grindley sends a henchman to pick up Toni, supposedly to take her to Larry at the police station. She tells him the map is in the hotel safe, and he forces her to write a note authorizing the henchman to pick it up. He gets it, but Larry returns and the man is pointed out as the one who took Toni away. He follows him to the building where she is held and goes up the fire escape where Grindley's men jump him and force him over the railing. He falls!

Chapter Fourteen: The Jaws of Destruction

Kent grabs a railing at a lower level and pulls himself to safety. He knocks out one heavy, then chases another to the roof and battles him and Grindley. Toni gets out of her room in time to slug Grindley. They recover the map and go into the hotel. Collins and Jerry arrive at Cortez, where Jerry phones her the story of finding the treasure and says that the Professor is her father. Larry is skeptical, but agrees to take her back to the island on the next boat. Dr. X and Zanya overhear this and tell Grindley, who decides to follow them. Cuttle tells Westmore the youngsters have left, and they take a seaplane for Treasure Island. Jerry meets Kent and Toni as they land and takes her to the big house, but asks Kent to remain behind.

Grindley, Dr. X, and Zanya are secretly on the island. The Shark seizes Toni and takes her map. Grindley, with some guards loyal to him, capture Larry. Jerry runs for help and sees Kent taken to the edge of the volcano. He is given a last chance to hand over the map, but cannot produce it. He is hurled into the crater, and falls toward the flaming molten lava!

Chapter Fifteen: Justice

Larry lands on a ledge and finds a way out, meeting Jerry who tells him of events at the house. The Professor watches Collins complete his map and leave to find the treasure. Jerry and Kent see him enter the chamber, and Larry follows him inside. The Shark, now completely mad, attacks him with an ancient sword. Larry knocks him down and gets out as the door swings shut behind him. The volcano erupts, and Cuttle sends Westmore into the tunnel, then goes back for Toni. Grindley has found her tied in the room of doors and learned that Collins has the entire map. Cuttle attacks him and foces him into a closet as Larry arrives to free the girl. They join Jerry and the Professor and head for the tunnel. Collins comes to and tries to carry some of the treasure out but finds himself trapped in the cavern.

Dr. X and Zanya release Grindley, who realizes that his enemies are escaping and detonates mines set in the tunnels. Kent and the others rush on ahead of the blasts, and see the passage flooded behind them. The explosions increase the volcanic activity, and lava and falling rocks destroy several buildings. The great hall collapses around the plotters as they try to escape, then the entire house is destroyed. The treasure chamber crashes in on Collins, and the Shark is buried alive with the gold he had sought for so many years.

At Cortez, Toni and the others look back to see Treasure Island destroyed in one last great volcanic explosion. Later, Toni meets her real father and learns the secret of the Ghost - which was an image projected by the Professor with a device utilizing his ray light. The voice had been done by ventriloquism. Cuttle confesses that he had hunted treasure for years - and removes his hook, a hiding place for hundreds of gems which he pours out before them. Larry takes a single ring from the horde and places in on Toni's finger.

THE END

SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND

CAST

Larry Kent	Don Terry
Toni Morrell	Gwen Gaze
Grindley	Grant Withers
Doctor X	Hobart Bosworth
Westmore	William Farnum
Carter Collins (The Shark)	Walter Miller
Captain Cuttle	George Rosener
Jameson	Dave O'Brien
Dreer	Yakima Canutt
Captain Tom Faxton	Warner Richmond
Paul Thorndyke	William Royle
Zanya	Sandra Karina
Salt Water Jerry	Joe Caits
Hawkins	Colin Campbell
The Professor	Patrick J. Kelly
Dolphin Captain	Edward Cassidy
Ship's Doctor	Josef Swickard
Cortez Heavies	Harry Harvey
	Reed Howes
	Louis Caits
Cortez Woman	Clara Kimball Young
Mainland Henchman	Blackie Whiteford
	Ted Adams
Newspaperman	Joe Girard
Pirate	Harry Burns
Mole Man	Joe Caits
Pedro	Frank Lackteen
Producer	Louis Weiss
Director	Elmer Clifton
Supervisor	George Merrick
Production Manager	Clarence D. Brickner
Story by	Ron Hubbard
Dialogue Director	George Rosener
Continuity	George Rosener
	Elmer Clifton
	George Merrick
Photography	Edward Linden
	Herman Schopp
Film Editor	Earl Turner
Sound	Corson Jowett
Sword Play Supervisor	Ralph B. Faulkner
Special Effects	Kenneth Peach
	Earl Bunn
Set Designer	Paul Palmentola
Art Director	James Altwies
Assistant Director	Adrian Weiss
Musical Director	Abe Meyer

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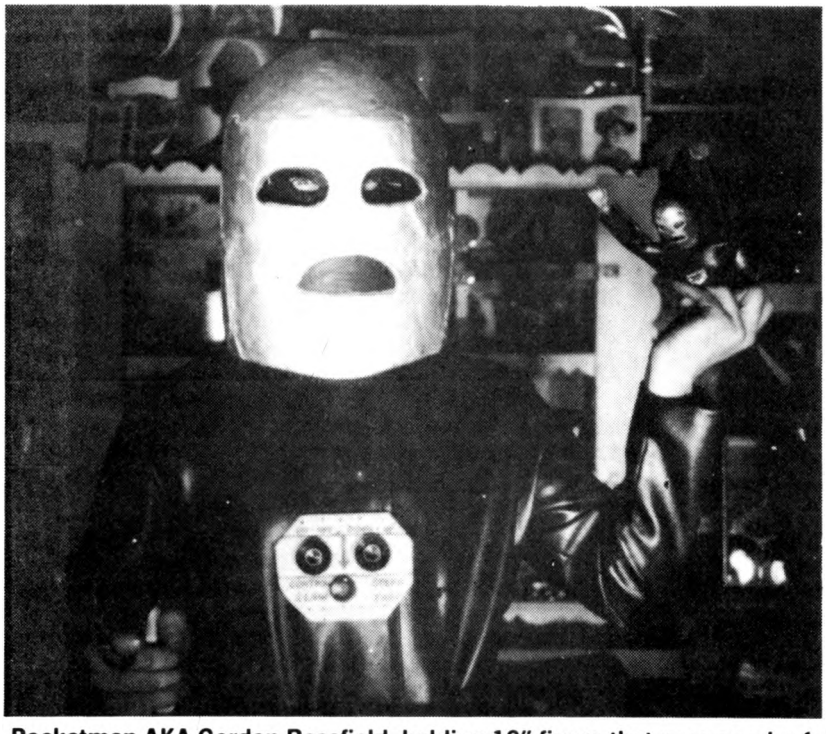
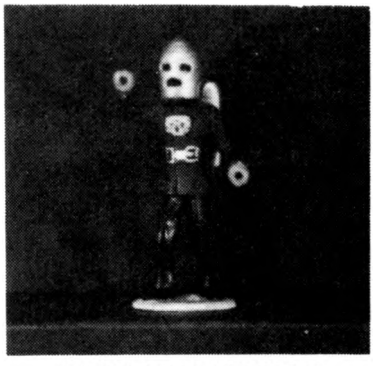
FLASH AND MING

GORDON BASSFIELD AND STEVE DeMAURO



Rocketman AKA Gordon Bassfield, holding 18" figure that runs on wire for home rocketman movie.



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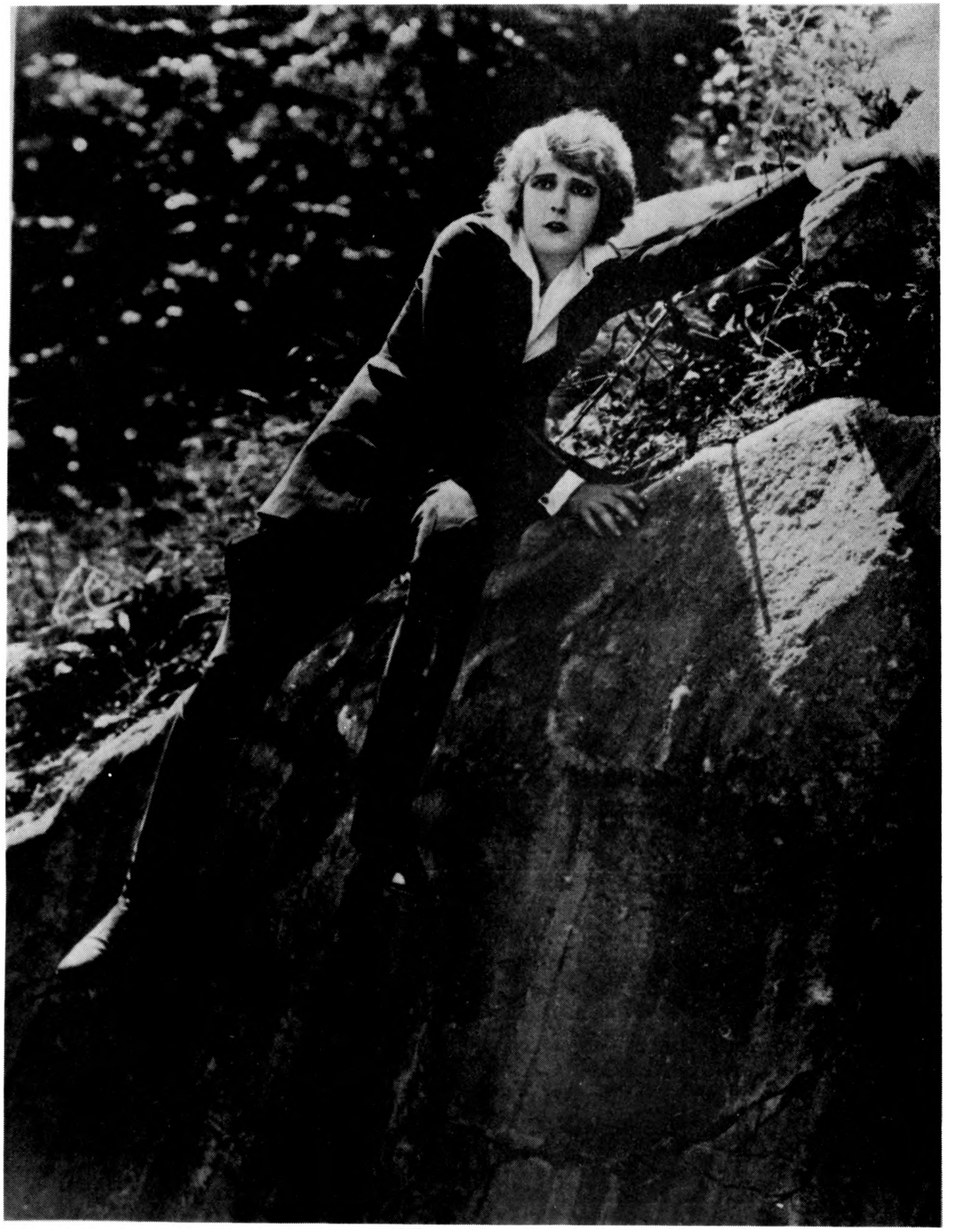

SHE STARTED IT ALL - QUEEN PEARL WHITE

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Phantom Stills, Villian of the Year, Anthony Warde interview, Serial Mailbag, Serial Profiles, Serials and the B Westerns, Reel Books Serial Marquee. They're going to conquer the world.

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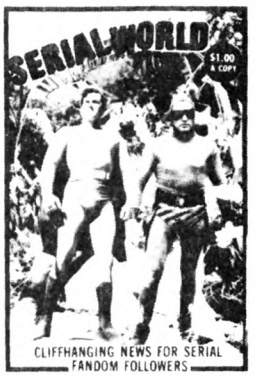
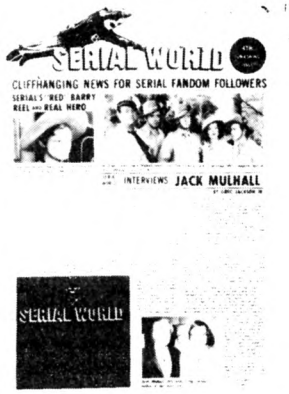


Harry Lauter interview, Serial and B Western stars part 2, How the Serials rate, interview with John Hart, Superman in the serials, Kids Matinee.

ISSUE #4



Red Barry, interview with Jack Mulhall, Superman Ch. 1, Serial Showcase, Great serial villains and ads.

ISSUE #5

Tim Tyler issue, interview with Frankie Thomas, How Serials Rate part 2, Superman Ch. 2, Behind the Cliffhanging scenes.

ISSUE #7

32 PAGE ISSUE, Scenes from the serials, How the Serials Rate Part 3, Superman con't, Serial Mailbag, Reel Books, Interview with Louise Currie, Bunglers of the Stratosphere, Serial Marquee, Serials Kings & Queens, Ads.

ISSUE #8

32 PAGE ISSUE. Serial Showcase & Mailbag, Ace Drummond, 1st Western Coast Western Film Con, Terry Frost interview, Death Takes Crash Corrigan, Superman con't, Nostalgia Ads.

ISSUE #9

32 PAGE ISSUE. Interview with Marshall Reed, Serial Marquee, Great Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok, Pin-up, Jungle Menace, Ads.

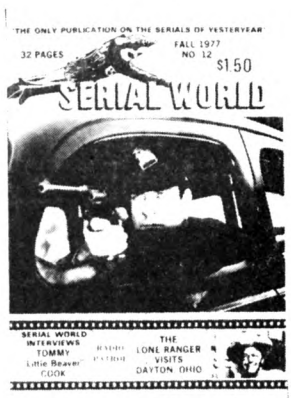
ISSUE #10

32 PAGE ISSUE. Interview with Tris Coffin, Last Chapter, Ralph Byrd Remembered, Deadwood Dick, Pin-up, Jungle Menace Part 2, Serial Marquee, Ads.

ISSUE #11

24 PAGE ISSUE. Blackhawk, Superman Strikes Back, Interview with Duncan Renaldo, Mysterious Pilot, Serialtoon.

ISSUE #12



32 PAGE ISSUE. Radio Patrol, Lone Ranger Visits Dayton, Mysterious Pilot con't, Interview with Tommy Cook, Mailbag, Ads

ISSUE #13

The Shadow Serial, Did You Know That, Spy Smasher, Serial Showcase, Serial Mailbag, Ads.

ISSUE #14

Flash Gordon Conquers Minneapolis, Spy Smasher, King of the Mounties, Did You Know That, Serial Mailbag.

ISSUE #15

The Phantom, Buck Rogers, King of the Mounties con't, Serial Mailbag & Serial Marquee.

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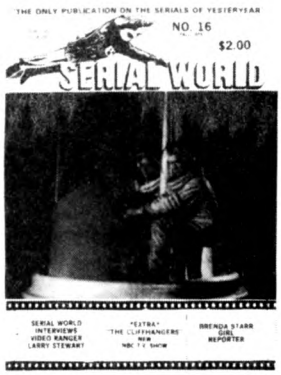

"The Cliffhangers" New NBC T.V. Show, Brenda Starr - Girl Reporter, Interview with Video Ranger Larry Stewart, and much more.

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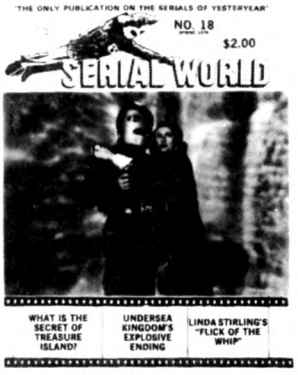

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